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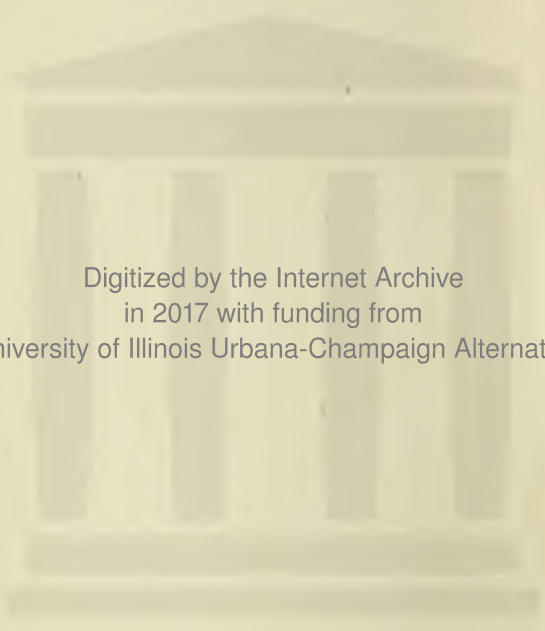
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THE ART  
OF  
NEEDLE-WORK,  
FROM THE EARLIEST AGES;  
INCLUDING  
SOME NOTICES OF THE  
ANCIENT HISTORICAL TAPESTRIES.

---

EDITED BY  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE COUNTESS OF WILTON.

---

*Mrs. Elizabeth Stone*

"I WRITE THE NEEDLE'S PRAYSE."

*NEW EDITION.*

LONDON:  
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,  
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

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1844.

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TO  
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY  
THE QUEEN DOWAGER,

THIS LITTLE WORK,

INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF AN  
ART ENNOBLED BY HER MAJESTY'S PRACTICE, AND BY HER  
EXAMPLE RECOMMENDED TO THE  
WOMEN OF ENGLAND,

IS,

BY HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS PERMISSION,  
INSCRIBED

WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT,

BY HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRATEFUL

AND MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHORESS.





## P R E F A C E.

---

IF there be one mechanical art of more universal application than all others, and therefore of more universal interest, it is that which is practised with the NEEDLE. From the stateliest denizen of the proudest palace, to the humblest dweller in the poorest cottage, all more or less ply the busy needle ; from the crying infant of a span long and an hour's life, to the silent tenant of " the narrow house," all need its practical services.

Yet have the NEEDLE and its beautiful and useful creations hitherto remained without their due meed of praise and record, either in sober prose or sounding rhyme,—while their glittering antithesis, the scathing and destroying sword, has been the theme of admiring and exulting record, without limit and without end !

The progress of real civilization is rapidly putting an end to this false *prestige* in favour of the " Destructive " weapon, and as rapidly raising the

“ Conservative ” one in public estimation ; and the time seems at length arrived when that triumph of female ingenuity and industry, “ THE ART OF NEEDLEWORK ” may be treated as a fitting subject of historical and social record—fitting at least for a female hand.

The chief aim of this volume is that of affording a comprehensive record of the most noticeable facts, and an entertaining and instructive gathering together of the most curious and pleasing associations, connected with “ THE ART OF NEEDLEWORK,” from the earliest ages to the present day ; avoiding entirely the dry technicalities of the art, yet furnishing an acceptable accessory to every work-table—a fitting tenant of every boudoir.

The Authoress thinks thus much necessary in explanation of the objects of a work on what may be called a maiden topic ; and she trusts that that leniency in criticism which is usually accorded to the adventurer on an unexplored track will not be withheld from her.

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THE ART  
OF  
NEEDLEWORK.

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INTRODUCTION.

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CHAPTER I.

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“ Le donne son venute in eccellenza  
Di ciascun 'arte, ove hanno posto cura ;  
E qualunque all' istorie abbia avvertenza,  
Ne sente ancor la fama non oscura.

\* \* \*

E forse ascosi han lor debiti onori  
L' invidia, o il non saper degli scrittori.”—ARIOSTO.

IN all ages woman may lament the ungallant silence of the historian. His pen is the record of sterner actions than are usually the vocation of the gentler sex, and it is only when fair individuals have been by extraneous circumstances thrown out, as it were, on the canvas of human affairs — when they

have been forced into a publicity little consistent with their natural sphere—that they have become his theme. Consequently those domestic virtues which are woman's greatest pride, those retiring characteristics which are her most becoming ornament, those gentle occupations which are her best employment, find no record on pages whose chief aim and end is the blazoning of manly heroism, of royal disputations, or of trumpet-stirring records. And if this is the case even with historians of enlightened times, who have the gallantry to allow woman to be a component part of creation, we can hardly wonder that in darker days she should be utterly and entirely overlooked.

Mohammed asserted that women had no souls; and moreover, that, setting aside the “diviner part,” there had only existed *four* of whom the mundane qualifications entitled them to any degree of approbation. Before him, Aristotle had asserted that Nature only formed women when and because she found that the imperfection of matter did not permit her to carry on the world without them.

This complimentary doctrine has not wanted supporters. “Des hommes très sages ont écrit que la Nature, dont l'intention et le dessein est toujours de tendre à la perfection, ne produirait s'il était possible, jamais que des hommes, et que quand il naît une femme c'est un monstre dans l'ordre de ses productions, né expressément contre sa volonté: ils ajoutent, que, comme on voit naître un homme aveugle, boiteux, ou avec quelqu'autre défaut nature; et comme on voit à certain arbres des fruits qui ne meurissent jamais; ainsi l'on peut dire que la

femme est un animal produit par accident et par le hasard.”\*

Without touching upon this extreme assertion that woman is but “un monstre,” an animal produced by chance, we may observe briefly, that women have ever, with some few exceptions,† been considered as a degraded and humiliated race, until the promulgation of the Christian religion elevated them in society : and that this distinction still exists is evident from the difference at this moment exhibited between the countries professing Mohammedanism and those professing Christianity.

Still, though in our happy country it is now pretty generally allowed that women are “des créatures humaines,” it is no new remark that they are comparatively lightly thought of by the “nobler” gender. This is absolutely the case even in those countries where civilization and refinement have elevated the sex to a higher grade in society than they ever before reached. Women are courted, flattered, caressed, extolled ; but still the difference is there, and the “lords of the creation” take care that it shall be understood. Their own pursuits—public,

\* On aurait de la peine à se persuader qu’une pareille opinion eût été mise gravement en question dans un concile, et qu’on n’eût décidé en faveur des femmes qu’après un assez long examen. Cependant le fait est très véritable, et ce fut dans le Concile de Macon.

Problème sur les Femmes, où l’on essaye de prouver que les femmes ne sont point des créatures humaines.—*Amsterdam*, 1744.

† As, for instance, the ancient Germans, and their offshoots, the Saxons, &c.

are the theme of the historian—private, of the biographer; nay, the every-day circumstances of life—their dinners—their speeches—their toasts—and their *post cœnam* eloquence, are noted down for immortality: whilst a woman with as much sense, with more eloquence, with lofty principles, enthusiastic feelings, and pure conduct—with sterling virtue to command respect, and the self-denying conduct of a martyr—steals noiselessly through her appointed path in life; and if she excite a passing comment during her pilgrimage, is quickly lost in oblivion when that pilgrimage hath reached its appointed goal.

And this is but as it should be. Woe to that nation whose women, as a habit, as a custom, as a matter of course, seek to intrude on the attributes of the other sex, and in a vain, a foolish, and surely a most unsuccessful pursuit of publicity, or power, or fame, forget the distinguishing, the high, the noble, the lofty, the pure and *unearthly* vocation of their sex. Every earthly charity, every unearthly virtue, are the legitimate object of woman's pursuit. It is hers to soothe pain, to alleviate suffering, to soften discord, to solace the time-worn spirit on earth, to train the youthful one for heaven. Such is woman's magnificent vocation; and in the peaceful discharge of such duties as these she may be content to steal noiselessly on to her appointed bourne, 'the world forgetting, by the world forgot.'

But these splendid results are not the effect of great exertions—of sudden, and uncertain, and enthusiastic efforts. They are the effect of a course, of a system of minor actions and of occupations, *in-*

*dividually* insignificant in their appearance, and noiseless in their approach. They are like "the gentle dew from heaven" in their silent unnoted progress, and, like that, are known only by their blessed results.

They involve a routine of minor duties which often appear, at first view, little if at all connected with such mighty ends. But such an inference would lead to a false conclusion. It is entirely of insignificant details that the sum of human life is made up; and any one of those details, how insignificant soever *apparently* in itself, as a link in the chain of human life is of *definite* relative value. The preparing of a spoonful of gruel may seem a very insignificant matter; yet who that stands by the sick-bed of one near and dear to him, and sees the fevered palate relieved, the exhausted frame refreshed by it, but will bless the hand that made it? It is not the independent intrinsic worth of each isolated action of woman which stamps its value—it is their bearing and effect on the mass. It is the daily and hourly accumulation of minute particles which form the vast amount.

And if we look for that feminine employment which adds most absolutely to the comforts and the elegancies of life, to what other shall we refer than to NEEDLEWORK? The hemming of a pocket-handkerchief is a trivial thing in itself, yet it is a branch of an art which furnishes a useful, a graceful, and an agreeable occupation to one-half of the human race, and adds very materially to the comforts of the other half.

How sings our own especial Bard?—

“ So long as garments shall be made or worne ;  
 So long as hemp, or flax, or sheep shall bear  
 Their linnen wollen fleeces yeare by yeare ;  
 So long as silkwormes, with exhausted spoile  
 Of their own entrailles, for mans gaine shall toyle :  
 Yea, till the world be quite dissolv'd and past,  
 So long, at least, the NEEDLE's use shall last.”

'T is true, indeed, that as far as *necessity*, rigidly speaking, is concerned, a very small portion of needlework would suffice ; but it is also true that the very signification of the word *necessity* is lost, buried amidst the accumulations of ages. We talk habitually of *mere necessities*, but the fact is, that we have hardly an idea of what merely necessities are.

St. Paul, the hermit, when abiding in the wilderness, might be reduced to necessities ; and in that noble and exalted instance of high principle referred to by Mr. Wesley,\* where a person unknown to others, seeking no praise, and looking to no reward but the applaudings of his own conscience, bought a pennyworth of parsnips weekly, and on them, and them alone, with the water in which they were boiled, lived, that he might save money to pay his debts.— Surely a man of such incorruptible integrity as this would spend nothing intentionally in superfluities of dress—and yet, mark how many he would have. His shirt would be “ curiously wrought,” his neck-cloth neatly hemmed ; his coat and waistcoat and trousers would have undergone the usual mysteries of shaping and seaming ; his hat would be neatly

\* Southey's Life ; vol. ii.



bound round the edge ; his stockings woven or knitted ; his shoes soled and stitched and tied ; neither must we debar him a pocket-handkerchief and a pair of gloves. And see what this man—as great, nay, a greater anchoret in his way than St. Paul, for he had the world and its temptations all around, while the saint had fled from both—yet see what *he* thought absolutely requisite in lieu of the sheepskin which was St. Paul's wardrobe. See what was required “to cover and keep warm” in the eighteenth century,—nay, not even to “keep warm,” for we did not allow either great-coat or comforter. See then what was required merely to “cover,” and then say whether the art of needlework is a trivial one.

Could we, as in days of yore, when sylphs and fairies deigned to mingle with mortals, and shed their gracious influence on the scenes and actions of every-day life—could we, by some potent spell or by some fitting oblation, propitiate the Genius of Needlework, induce her to descend from her hidden shrine, and indulge her votaries with a glimpse of her radiant SELF—what a host of varied reminiscences would that glimpse conjure up in our minds, as—

“—— guided by historic truth,  
We *trod* the long extent of backward time !”

SHE was twin born with necessity, the first necessity the world had ever known, but she quickly left this stern and unattractive companion, and followed many leaders in her wide and varied range. She became the handmaiden of Fancy ; she adorned the train of Magnificence ; she waited upon Pomp ; she

decorated Religion ; she obeyed Charity ; she served Utility ; she aided Pleasure ; she pranked out Fun ; and she mingled with all and every circumstance of life.

Many changes and chances has it been her lot to behold. At one time honoured and courted, she was the acknowledged and cherished guest of the royal and noble. Then in gorgeous drapery, begemmed with brilliants, bedropped with gold, she reigned supreme in hall and palace ; or in silken tissue girt she adorned the high-born maiden's bower what time the "deeds of knighthood" were "in solemn canto" told. In still more rich array, in kingly purple, in regal tissue, in royal magnificence, she stood within the altar's sacred pale ; and her robes, rich in Tyrian dye, and glittering with Ophir's gold, swept the hallowed pavement. When battle aroused the land she inspirited the host. When the banner was unfurled she pointed to the device which sent its message home to every heart ; she displayed the cipher on the hero's pennon which nerved him sooner to relinquish life than it ; she entwined those initials in the scarf, the sight of which struck fresh ardour into his breast.

But she fell into disrepute, and was rejected from the halls of the noble. Still was she ever busy, ever occupied, and not only were her services freely given to all who required them, but given with such winning grace that she required but to be once known to be ever loved—so exquisitely did she adapt herself to the peculiarities of all.

With flowing ringlets and silken robe, carolling gaily as she worked, you would see her pinking the

ruffles of the Cavalier, and ever and anon adding to their piquancy by some new and dainty device: then you would behold her with smoothly plaited hair, and sad-coloured garment of serge, and looks like a November day, hemming the bands of a Roundhead, and withal adding numerous layers of starch. With grave and sedate aspect she would shape and sew the uncomely raiment of a Genevan divine; with neat-handed alacrity she would prepare the grave and becoming garments of the Anglican Church, though perhaps a gentle sigh would escape, a sigh of regret for the stately and glowing vestments of old: for they did honour to the house of God, not because they were stately and glowing, but because they were offerings of *our best*.

In all the sweet charities of domestic life she has ever been a participant. Often and again has she fled the splendid court, the glittering ball-room, and taken her station at the quiet hearth of the gentle and home-loving matron. She has lightened the weariness of many a solitary vigil, and she has heightened the enjoyment of many a social gossip.

Nor even while courted and caressed in courts and palaces did Needlework absent herself from the habitations of the poor. Oh no, she was their familiar friend, the daily and hourly companion of their firesides. And when she experienced, as all do experience, the fickleness of court favour, she was cherished and sheltered there. And there she remained, happy in her utility, till again summoned by royal mandate to resume her station near the throne. The illustrious and excellent lady who lately filled the British throne, and who reigned still more

surely in the hearts of Englishwomen, and who has most graciously permitted us to place her honoured name on these pages, allured Needlework from her long seclusion, and reinstated her in her once familiar place among the great and noble.

---

Fair reader ! you see that this gentle dame NEEDLEWORK is of ancient lineage, of high descent, of courtly habits : will you not permit me to make you somewhat better acquainted ? Pray travel onward with me to her shrine. The way is not toilsome, nor is the track rugged ; but,

“ Where the silver fountains wander,  
Where the golden streams meander,”

amid the sunny meads and flower-bestrewn paths of fancy and taste—there will she beguile us. Do not then, pray do not, forsake me.

---

## CHAPTER I.

## EARLY NEEDLEWORK.

---

“ The use of sewing is exceeding old,  
As in the sacred text it is enroll’d :  
Our parents first in Paradise began.”—JOHN TAYLOR.

---

“ The rose was in rich bloom on Sharon’s plain,  
When a young mother, with her first-born, thence  
Went up to Sion ; for the boy was vow’d  
Unto the Temple service. By the hand  
She led him ; and her silent soul the while,  
Oft as the dewy laughter of his eye  
Met her sweet serious glance, rejoic’d to think  
That aught so pure, so beautiful, was hers,  
To bring before her God.”—HEMANS.

IN speaking of the origin of needlework it will be necessary to define accurately what we mean by the term “ needlework ;” or else, when we assert that Eve was the first sempstress, we may be taken to task by some critical antiquarian, because we may not be able precisely to prove that the frail and beautiful mother of mankind made use of a little weapon of polished steel, finely pointed at one end and bored at the other, and “ warranted not to cut in the eye.” Assuredly we do not mean to assert

that she did use such an instrument; most probably—we would *almost* venture to say most *certainly*—she did not. But then again the cynical critic would attack us:—"You say that Eve was the first professor of *needlework*, and yet you disclaim the use of a needle for her."

No, good sir, we do not. Like other profound investigators and original commentators, we do not annihilate one hypothesis ere we are prepared with another, "ready cut and dried," to rise, like any fabled phoenix, on the ashes of its predecessor. It is not long since we were edified by a conversation which we heard, or rather overheard, between two sexagenarians—both well versed in antiquarian lore, and neither of them deficient in antiquarian tenacity of opinion—respecting some theory which one of them wanted to establish about some aborigines. The concluding remark of the conversation—and we opined that it might as well have formed the commencement—was—

"If you want to lay down *facts*, you must follow history; if you want to establish a system, it is quite easy to place the people where you like."

So, if I wished to "establish a system," I could easily make Eve work with a "superfine drill-eyed needle:" but this is not my object.

It seems most probable that Eve's first needle was a thorn:

"Before man's fall the rose was born,  
St. Ambrose sayes, without the thorn;  
But, for man's fault, then was the thorn,  
Without the fragrant rosebud, born."

Why thorns should spring up at the precise mo-



ment of the fall is difficult to account for in a world where everything has its use, except we suppose that they were meant for needles: and general analogy leads us to this conclusion; for in almost all existing records of people in what we are pleased to call a "savage" state, we find that women make use of this primitive instrument, or a fish-bone. "Avant l'invention des aiguilles d'acier, on a dû se servir, à leur défaut, d'épines, ou d'arêtes de poissons, ou d'os d'animaux." And as Eve's first specimen of needlework was certainly completed before the sacrifice of any living thing, we may safely infer that the latter implements were not familiar to her. The Cimbrian inhabitants of Britain passed their time in weaving baskets, or in sewing together for garments the skins of animals taken in the chase, while they used as needles for uniting these simple habiliments small bones of fish or animals rudely sharpened at one end; and needles just of the same sort were used by the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, when the celebrated Captain Cook first visited them.

Proceed we to the material of the first needlework.

"They sewed themselves fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

Thus the earliest historical record; and thus the most esteemed poetical commentator.

"Those leaves

They gather'd, broad as Amazonian targe,  
And, with what skill they had, together sew'd,  
To gird their waist."

It is supposed that the leaves alluded to here were

those of the banian-tree, of which the leaves, says Sir James Forbes, are large, soft, and of a lively green; the fruit a small bright scarlet fig. The Hindoos are peculiarly fond of this tree; they consider its long duration, its outstretching arms, and overshadowing beneficence, as emblems of the Deity, and almost pay it divine honours. The Brahmins, who thus “find a fane in every sacred grove,” spend much of their time in religious solitude, under the shade of the banian-tree; they plant it near the dewals, or Hindoo temples; and in those villages where there is no structure for public worship, they place an image under one of these trees, and there perform morning and evening sacrifice. The size of some of these trees is stupendous. Sir James Forbes mentions one which has three hundred and fifty *large* trunks, the smaller ones exceeding three thousand; and another, whereunder the chief of the neighbourhood used to encamp in magnificent style; having a saloon, dining-room, drawing-room, bed-chambers, bath, kitchen, and every other accommodation, all in separate tents; yet did this noble tree cover the whole, together with his carriages, horses, camels, guards, and attendants; while its spreading branches afforded shady spots for the tents of his friends, with their servants and cattle. And in the march of an army it has been known to shelter seven thousand men.

Such is the banian-tree, the pride of Hindûstan: which Milton refers to as the one which served “our general mother” for her first essay in the art of needlework.

“ Both together went  
Into the thickest wood ; there soon they chose  
The fig-tree ; not that tree for fruit renown’d,  
But such as at this day, to Indians known,  
In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms,  
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground  
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow  
About the mother tree, a pillar’d shade  
High overarch’d, and echoing walks between :  
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,  
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds  
At loopholes cut through thickest shade : Those leaves  
They gather’d, broad as Amazonian targe ;  
And, with what skill they had, together sew’d,  
To gird their waist.”

Some of the most interesting incidents in Holy Writ turn on the occupation of needlework ; slight sketches, nay, hardly so much, but mere touches which engage all the gentler, and purer, and holier emotions of our nature. For instance : the beloved child of the beautiful mother of Israel, for whom Jacob toiled fourteen years, which were but as one day for the love he bore her—this child, so eagerly coveted by his mother, so devotedly loved by his father, and who was destined hereafter to wield the destinies of such a mighty empire—had a token, a peculiar token, bestowed on him of his father’s overwhelming love and affection. And what was it ? “ A coat of many colours ; ” probably including some not in general use, and obtained by an elaborate process. Entering himself into the minutiae of a concern, which, however insignificant in itself, was valuable in his eyes as giving pleasure to his boy, the fond father selects pieces of various-coloured cloth, and sets female hands, the most expert of his household, to join them together in the form of a coat.

But, alas! to whom should he intrust the task? She whose fingers would have revelled in it, Rachel the mother, was no more; her warm heart was cold, her busy fingers rested in the tomb. Would his sister, would Dinah execute the work? No; it was but too probable that she shared in the jealousy of her brothers. No matter. The father apportions the task to his handmaidens, and himself superintends the performance. With pleased eye he watches its progress, and with benignant smile he invests the happy and gratified child with the glowing raiment.

This elaborate piece of work, the offering of paternal affection to please a darling child, was probably the simple and somewhat clumsy original of those which were afterwards embroidered and subsequently woven in various colours, and which came to be regarded as garments of dignity and appropriated to royalty; as it is said of Tamar that "she had a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled." It is even now customary in India to dress a favourite or beautiful child in a coat of various colours tastefully *sewed together*; and it may not perhaps be very absurd to refer even to so ancient an origin as Joseph's coat of many colours the superstition now prevalent in some countries, which teaches that a child clothed in a garment of many colours is safe from the blasting of malicious tongues or the machinations of evil spirits.

In the Book of Samuel we read, "And Hannah, his mother, made him a little coat." This seems a trivial incident enough, yet how interesting is the

scene which this simple mention conjures up ! With all the earnest fervour of that separated race who hoped each one to be the honoured instrument of bringing a Saviour into the world, Hannah, then childless, prayed that this reproach might be taken from her. Her prayer was heard, her son was born ; and in holy gratitude she reared him, not for wealth, for fame, for worldly honour, or even for her own domestic comfort,—but, from his birth, and before his birth, she devoted him as the servant of the Most High. She indulged herself with his presence only till her maternal cares had fitted him for duty ; and then, with a tearful eye it might be, and a faltering footstep, but an unflinching resolution, she devoted him to the altar of her God.

But never did his image leave her mind : never amid the fair scions which sprang up and bloomed around her hearth did her thoughts forsake her first-born ; and yearly, when she went up to the Tabernacle with Elkanah her husband, did she take him “ a little coat ” which she had made. We may fancy her quiet happy thoughts when at this employment ; we may fancy the eager earnest questionings of the little group by whom she was surrounded ; the wondering about their absent brother ; the anxious catechisings respecting his whereabouts ; and, above all, the admiration of the new garment itself, and the earnest criticisms on it ; especially if in form and fashion it should somewhat differ from their own. And then arrives the moment when the garment is committed to its envelope ; and the mother, weeping to part from her little ones, yet longing to see her absent boy, receives their adieux



and their thousand reminiscences, and sets forth on her journey.

Again she treads the hallowed courts, again she meekly renews her vows, and again a mother's longings, a mother's hopes are quenched in the full enjoyment of a mother's love. Beautiful and good, the blessing of Heaven attending him, and throwing a beam of light on his fair brow, the pure and holy child appears like a seraph administering at that altar to which he had been consecrated a babe, and at which his ministry was sanctioned even by the voice of the Most High himself, when in the solemn stillness of midnight he breathed his wishes into the heart of the child, and made him, infant as he was, the medium of his communications to one grown hoary in the service of the altar.

The solemn duties ended, Hannah invests her hopeful boy with the little coat, whilst her willing fingers lingeringly perform their office, as if loth to quit a task in which they so much delight. And then with meek step and grateful heart she wends her homeward way, and meditates tranquilly on the past interview, till the return of another year finds her again on her pilgrimage of love—the joyful bearer of another “little coat.”

And a high tribute is paid to needlework in the history of Dorcas, who was restored to life by the apostle St. Peter, by whom “all the widows stood weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.”

“In these were read

The monuments of Dorcas dead :

These were thy acts, and thou shalt have

These hung as honours o'er thy grave :

And after us, distressed,  
Should fame be dumb,  
Thy very tomb  
Would cry out, Thou art blessed ! ”

But it is not merely as an object of private and domestic utility that needlework is referred to in the Bible. It was applied early to the service of the Tabernacle, and the directions concerning it are very clear and specific ; but before this time, and most probably as early as the time of Abraham, rich and valuable raiment of needlework was accounted of as part of the *bonâ fide* property of a wealthy man. When the patriarch's steward sought Rebekah for the wife of Isaac, he “ brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and *raiment*.” This “ raiment ” consisted, in all likelihood, of garments embroidered with gold, the handiwork, it may be, of the female slaves of the patriarch ; such garments being in very great esteem from the earliest ages, and being then, as now, a component portion of those presents or offerings without which one personage hardly thought of approaching another.

Fashion in those days was not quite the chameleon-hued creature that she is at present ; nor were the fabrics on which her fancy was displayed quite so light and airy : their gold *was* gold—not silk covered with gilded silver ; and consequently the raiment of those days, in-wrought with slips of gold beaten thin and cut into spangles or strips, and sewed on in various patterns, sometimes intermingled with precious stones, would carry its own intrinsic value with it.

This "raiment" descended from father to son, as a chased goblet and a massy wrought urn does now ; and was naturally and necessarily inventoried as a portion of the property. The practice of making presents of garments is still quite usual amongst the eastern nations ; and to such an excess was it carried with regard to those who, from their calling or any other circumstance, were in public favour, that, so late as the ninth century, Bokteri, an illustrious poet of Cufah, had so many presents made him, that at his death he was found possessed of a hundred complete suits of clothes, two hundred shirts, and five hundred turbans.

Horace, speaking of Lucullus (who had pillaged Asia, and first introduced Asiatic\* refinements among the Romans), says that, some persons having waited on him to request the loan of a hundred suits out of his wardrobe for the Roman stage, he exclaimed—"A hundred suits ! how is it possible for me to furnish such a number ? However, I will look over them and send you what I have."—After some time he writes a note and tells them he had *five thousand*, to the whole or part of which they were welcome.

In all the eastern world formerly, and to a great

\* Persia had great wardrobes, where there were always many hundred habits, sorted, ready for presents, and the intendant of the wardrobe sent them to those persons for whom they were designed by the sovereign ; more than forty tailors were always employed in this service. In Turkey they do not attend so much to the richness as to the number of the dresses, giving more or fewer according to the dignity of the persons to whom they are presented, or the marks of favour the prince would confer on his guests.



extent now, the arraying a person in a rich dress is considered a very high compliment, and it was one of the ancient modes of investing with the highest degree of subordinate power. Thus was Joseph arrayed by Pharaoh, and Mordecai by Ahasuerus.

We all remember what important effects are produced by splendid robes in "The Tale of the Wonderful Lamp," and in many other of those fascinating tales (which are allowed to be rigidly correct in the delineations of eastern life). They were doubtless esteemed the richest part of the spoil after a battle, as we find the mother of Sisera apportioning them as his share, and reiterating her delighted anticipations of the "raiment of needlework" which should be his: "a prey of divers colours, of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil."

Job has many allusions to raiment as an essential part of "treasures" in the East; and our Saviour refers to the same when he desires his hearers not to lay up for themselves "treasures" on earth, where *moth* and rust corrupt. St. James even more explicitly: "Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your gold and silver is cankered, and your GARMENTS are moth-eaten."

The first notice we have of gold-wire or thread being used in embroidery is in Exodus, in the directions given for the embroidery of the priests' garments: from this it appears that the metal was still used alone, being beaten fine and then rounded. This art the Hebrews probably learnt from the Egyptians, by whom it was carried to such an as-

tonishing degree of nicety, that they could either weave it in or work it on their finest linen. And doubtless the productions of the Hebrews now must have equalled the most costly and intricate of those of Egypt. This the adornments of the Tabernacle testify.

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## CHAPTER III.

## NEEDLEWORK OF THE TABERNACLE.

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“ The cedars wave on Lebanon,  
But Judah’s statelier maids are gone.”—BYRON.

GORGEOUS and magnificent must have been the spectacle presented by that ancient multitude of Israel, as they tabernacled in the wilderness of Sinai. These steril solitudes are now seldom trodden by the foot of man, and the adventurous traveller who toils up their rugged steeps can scarce picture to himself a host sojourning there, so wild, so barren is the place, so fearful are the precipices, so dismal the ravines. On the spot where “ Moses talked with God” the grey and mouldering remnants of a convent attest the religious veneration and zeal of some of whom these ruins are the only memorial; and near them is a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin, while religious hands have crowned even the summit of the steep ascent by “ a house of prayer ;” and at the foot of the sister peak, Horeb, is an ancient Greek convent, founded by the Emperor Justinian 1400 years ago, which is occupied still by some harmless recluses, the monotony of whose lives is only broken by the few and far be-

tween visits of the adventurous traveller, or the more frequent and startling interruptions of the wild Arabs on their predatory expeditions.

But neither church nor temple of any sort, nor inquiring traveller, nor prowling Arab, varied the tremendous grandeur of the scene, when the Israelitish host encamped there. Weary and toilsome had been the pilgrimage from the base of the mountain where the desolation was unrelieved by a trace of vegetation, to the upper country or wilderness, called more particularly, "the Desert of Sinai," where narrow intersecting valleys, not destitute of verdure, cherished perhaps the lofty and refreshing palm. Here in the ravines, in the valleys, and amid the clefts of the rocks, clustered the hosts of Israel, while around them on every side arose lofty summits and towering precipices, where the eye that sought to scan their fearful heights was lost in the far-off dimness. Far, far around, spread this savage wilderness, so frowning, and dreary, and desolate, that any curious explorer beyond the precincts of the camp would quickly return to the *home* which its vicinity afforded even there.

Clustered closely as bees in a hive were the tents of the wandering race, yet with an order and a uniformity which even the unpropitious nature of the locality was not permitted to break; for, separated into tribes, each one, though sufficiently connected for any object of kindness or brotherhood, for public worship, or social intercourse, was inalienably distinct.

And in the midst, extending from east to west, a length of fifty-five feet, was reared the splendid

Tabernacle. For God had said, "Let them make me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them;" and behold, "they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the Lord's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim-wood for any work of the service brought it. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx-stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense."

And all these materials, which the "willing-hearted" offered in such abundance that proclamation was obliged to be made through the camp to stop their influx, had been wrought under the superintendence of Bezaleel and Aholiab, who were divinely inspired for the task; and the Tabernacle was now completed, with the exception of some of the finest needlework, which had not yet received the finishing touches.

But what was already done bore ample testimony

to the skill, the taste, and the industry of the "wise-hearted" daughters of Israel. The outer covering of the Tabernacle, or that which lay directly over the framework of boards of which it was constructed, and hung from the roof down the sides and west end, was formed of tabash skins; over this was another covering of ram-skins dyed red; a hanging made of goats' hair, such as is still used in the tents of the Bedouin Arabs, had been spun and woven by the matrons of the congregation, to hang over the skins; and these substantial draperies were beautifully concealed by a first or inner covering of fine linen. On this the more youthful women had embroidered figures of cherubim in scarlet, purple, and light blue, entwined with gold. They had made also sacerdotal vestments, the "coats of fine linen" worn by all the priests, which, when old, were unravelled, and made into wicks burnt in the feast of tabernacles. They had made the "girdles of needlework," which were long, very long pieces of fine twined linen (carried several times round the body), and were embroidered with flowers in blue, and purple, and scarlet: the "robe of the ephod" also for the high priest, of light blue, and elaborately wrought round the bottom in pomegranates; and the plain ephods for the priests.

But now the sun was declining in the western sky, and the busy artificers of all sorts were relaxing from the toil of the day.

In a retired spot, apart from the noise of the camp, paced one in solitary meditation. Stalwart he was in frame, majestic in bearing; he trod the earth like one of her princes; but the loftiness of his



demeanour was forgotten when you looked on the surpassing benignity of his countenance. Each accidental passer hushed his footstep and lowered his voice as he approached; more, as it should seem, from involuntary awe and reverence than from any understood prohibition.

But with some of these loiterers a child of some four or five summers, in earnest chase after a brilliant fly, whose golden wings glittered in the sunlight, heedlessly pursued it even to the very path of the Solitary, and to the interruption of his walk. Hastily, and somewhat peremptorily, the father calls him away. The stranger looks up, and casting a glance around, from an eye to whose brilliance that of the eagle would look dim, he for the first time sees the little intruder. Gently placing a hand on the child's head, "Bless thee," he said, in a voice whose every tone was melody: "Bless thee, little one; the blessing of the God of Israel be upon thee," and calmly resumed his walk. The child, as if awed, mutely returned to his friends, who, after casting a glance of reverence and admiration, returned to the camp.

Here, scattered all around, are groups occupied in those varied kinds of busy idleness which will naturally engage the moments of an intelligent multitude at the close of an active day. Here a knot of men in the pride of manhood, whose flashing eyes have lost none of their fire, whose raven locks are yet not varied by a single silver line, are talking politics—such politics as the warlike men of Israel would talk, when discoursing of the promised land and the hostile hosts through whose serried ranks they must

cut their intrepid way thither, and whom, impatient of all delay, they burn to engage. Here were elder ones, "whose natural force" was in some degree "abated," and who were lamenting the decree, however justly incurred, which forbade them to lay their bones in the land of their lifelong hope; and here was a patriarch, bowed down with the weight of years, whose silver hairs lay on his shoulders, whose snow-white beard flowed upon his breast, who as he leaned upon his staff was recounting to his rapt auditors the dealing of Jehovah with his people in ancient days; how the Most High visited his father Abraham, and had sworn unto Jacob that his seed should be brought out of captivity, and revisit the promised land. "And behold," said the old man, "it will now come to pass."

But what is passing in that detached portion of the camp? who sojourn in yonder tents which attract more general attention than all the others, and in which all ages and degrees seem interested? Now a group of females are there, eagerly conversing; anon a Hebrew mother leads her youthful and beautiful daughter, and seems to incite her to remain there; now a hoary priest enters, and in a few moments returns pondering; and anon a trio of more youthful Levites with pleased and animated countenances return from the same spot.

On a sudden is every eye turned thitherward; for he who just now paced the solitary glade—none other than the chosen leader of God's host, the majestic lawgiver, the meekest and the mightiest of all created beings—he likewise wends his way to these attractive tents. With him enters Aaron, a vener-



able man, with hoary beard and flowing white robes ; and follow him a majestic-looking female who was wont to lead the solemn dance—Miriam the sister of Aaron ; and a youth of heroic bearing, in the spring-time of that life whose maturity was spent in leading the chosen race to conquest in the promised land.

With proud and pleased humility did the fair inmates of those tents, the most accomplished of Israel's daughters, display to their illustrious visitors the "fine needlework" to which their time and talents had been for a long season devoted, and which was now on the eve of completion. The "holy garments" which God had commanded to be made "for glory and for beauty ;" the pomegranates on the hem of the high priest's robe, wrought in blue and purple and scarlet ; the flowers on his "girdle of needlework," glowing as in life ; the border on the ephod, in which every varied colour was shaded off into a rich and delicate tracery of gold ; and above all, that exquisite work, the most beautiful of all their productions—the veil which separated the "Holy of Holies," the place where the Most High vouchsafed his especial presence, where none but the high priest might presume to enter, and he but once a year, from the remaining portions of the Tabernacle. This beautiful hanging was of fine white linen, but the original fabric was hardly discernible amid the gorgeous tracery with which it was inwrought. The whole surface was covered with a profusion of flowers, intermixed with fanciful devices of every sort, except such as might represent the forms of animals—these were rigidly excluded. Cherubims seemed to be hovering around and grasping its gorgeous folds ;

and if tradition and history be to be credited, this drapery merited, if ever the production of the needle did merit, the epithet which English talent has since rendered classical, "*Needlework Sublime.*"

Long, despite the advancing shades of evening, would the visitors have lingered untired to comment upon this beautiful production, but one said, "Behold!" and immediately all, following the direction of his outstretched arm, looked towards the Tabernacle. There a thin spiral flame is seen to gleam palely through the pillar of smoke; but perceptibly it increases, and even while the eye is fixed it waxes stronger and brighter, and quickly though gradually the smoke has melted away, and a tall vivid flame of fire is in its place. Higher and taller it aspires: its spiral flame waxes broader and broader, ascends higher and higher, gleams brighter and brighter, till it mingles in the very vault of heaven, with the beams of the setting sun which bathe in crimson fire the summits of Sinai.

In the eastern sky the stars gleam brightly in the pure transparent atmosphere; and ere long the moon casts pale radiant beams adown the dark ravines, and utters her wondrous lore to the silent hills and the gloomy waste. The sounds of toil are hushed; the weary labourer seeks repose; the toil-worn wanderer is at rest: the murmuring sounds of domestic life sink lower and lower; the breath of prayer becomes fainter and fainter; the voice of praise, the evensong of Israel, comes stealing through the calm of evening, and now dies softly away. Nought is heard but the password of the sentinels; the far-off shriek of the bat as it flaps its

wings beneath the shadow of some fearful precipice ; or the scream of the eagle, which, wheeling round the lofty summits of the mountain, closes in less and lesser circles, till, as the last faint gleam of evening is lost in the dark horizon, it drops into its eyrie.

The moon and the stars keep their eternal watch ; the beacon-light of God's immediate presence flames unchanged by time or chance. It may be that the appointed earthly shepherd of that chosen flock passes the still hours of night and solitude in communion with his God ; but silence is over the wilderness, and the children of Israel are at rest.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## NEEDLEWORK OF THE EGYPTIANS.

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“ How is thy glory, Egypt, pass'd away !  
 Weep, child of ruin, o'er thy humbled name !  
 The wreck alone that marks thy deep decay  
 Now tells the story of thy former fame ! ”

THERE can be little doubt that the Jewish maidens were beholden to their residence in Egypt for that perfectness of finish in embroidery which was displayed so worthily in the service of the Tabernacle. Egypt was at this time the seat of science, of art, and learning ; for it was thought the highest summary which could be given of Moses' acquirements to say that he was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians. By the researches of the curious, new proofs are still being brought to light of the perfection of their skill in various arts, and we are not without testimony that the practice of the lighter and more ornamental bore progress with that of the stupendous and magnificent. Of these lighter pursuits we at present refer only to the art of needlework.

The Egyptian women were treated with courtesy, with honour, and even with deference : indeed, some historians have gone so far as to say that the women

transacted public business, to the exclusion of the men, who were engaged in domestic occupations. This misapprehension may have arisen from the fact of men being at times engaged at the loom, which in all other countries was then considered as exclusively a feminine occupation; spinning, however, was principally, if not entirely, confined to women, who had attained to such perfection in the pretty and valuable art, that, though the Egyptian yarn was all spun by the hand, some of the linen made from it was so exquisitely fine as to be called "woven air." And there are some instances recorded by historians which seem fully to bear out the appellation. For example: so delicate were the threads used for nets, that some of these nets would pass through a man's ring, and one person could carry a sufficient number of them to surround a whole wood. Amasis king of Egypt presented a linen corslet to the Rhodians of which the threads were each composed of 365 fibres; and he presented another to the Lacedemonians, richly wrought with gold; and each thread of this corslet, though itself very fine, was composed of 360 other threads all distinct.

Nor did these beautiful manufactures lack the addition of equally beautiful needlework. Though the gold thread used at this time was, as we have intimated, solid metal, still the Egyptians had attained to such perfection in the art of moulding it, that it was fine enough not merely to embroider, but even to interweave with the linen. The linen corslet of Amasis, presented, as we have remarked, to the Lacedemonians, surpassingly fine as was the material, was worked with a needle in figures of animals



in gold thread, and from the description given of the texture of the linen we may form some idea of the exquisite tenuity of the gold wire which was used to ornament it.

Corslets of linen of a somewhat stronger texture than this one, which was doubtless meant for merely ornamental wear, were not uncommon amongst the ancients. The Greeks made thoraces of hide, hemp, linen, or twisted cord. Of the latter there are some curious specimens in the interesting museum of the United Service Club. Alexander had a double thorax of linen; and Iphicrates ordered his soldiers to lay aside their heavy metal cuirass, and go to battle in hempen armour. And among the arms painted in the tomb of Rameses III. at Thebes is a piece of defensive armour, a sort of coat or covering for the body, made of rich stuff, and richly embroidered with the figures of lions and other animals.

The dress of the Egyptian ladies of rank was rich and somewhat gay: in its general appearance not very dissimilar from the gay chintzes of the present day, but of more value as the material was usually linen; and though sometimes stamped in patterns, and sometimes interwoven with gold threads, was much more usually worked with the needle. The richest and most elegant of these were of course selected to adorn the person of the queen; and when in the holy book the royal Psalmist is describing the dress of a bride, supposed to have been Pharaoh's daughter, and that she shall be brought to the king "in raiment of needlework," he says, as proof of the gorgeousness of her attire, 'her clothing is of wrought gold.' This is supposed to mean a garment richly

embroidered with the needle in figures in gold thread, after the manner of Egyptian stitchery.

Perhaps no royal lady was ever more magnificently dowered than the queen of Egypt; her apparel might well be gorgeous. Diodorus says that when Mœris, from whom the lake derived its name, and who was supposed to have made the canal, had arranged the sluices for the introduction of the water, and established everything connected with it, he assigned the sum annually derived from this source as a dowry to the queen for the purchase of jewels, ointments, and other objects connected with the toilette. The provision was certainly very liberal, being a talent every day, or upwards of £70,700 a year; and when this formed only a portion of the pin-money of the Egyptian queens, to whom the revenues of the city of Anthylla, famous for its wines, were given for their dress, it is certain they had no reason to complain of the allowance they enjoyed.

The Egyptian needlewomen were not solely occupied in the decoration of their persons. The deities were robed in rich vestments, in the preparation of which the proudest in the land felt that they were worthily occupied. This was a source of great gain to the priests, both in this and other countries, as, after decorating the idol gods for a time, these rich offerings were their perquisites, who of course encouraged this notable sort of devotion. We are told that it was carried so far that some idols had both winter and summer garments.

Tokens of friendship consisting of richly embroidered veils, handkerchiefs, &c., were then, as now,

passing from one fair hand to another, as pledges of affection; and as the last holy office of love, the bereaved mother, the desolate widow, or the maiden whose budding hopes were blighted by her lover's untimely death, might find a fanciful relief to her sorrows by decorating the garment which was to enshroud the spiritless but undecaying form. The chief proportion of the mummy-cloths which have been so ruthlessly torn from these outraged relics of humanity are coarse; but some few have been found delicately and beautifully embroidered; and it is not unnatural to suppose that this difference was the result of feminine solicitude and undying affection.

The embroidering of the sails of vessels too was pursued as an article of commerce, as well as for the decoration of native pleasure-boats. The ordinary sails were white; but the king and his grandees on all gala occasions made use of sails richly embroidered with the phœnix, with flowers, and various other emblems and fanciful devices. Many also were painted, and some interwoven in checks and stripes. The boats used in sacred festivals upon the Nile were decorated with appropriate symbols, according to the nature of the ceremony or the deity in whose service they were engaged; and the edges of the sails were finished with a coloured hem or border, which would occasionally be variegated with slight embroidery.

Shakspeare's description of the barge of Cleopatra when she embarked on the river Cydnus to meet Antony, poetical as it is, seems to be rigidly correct in detail.



ENOBARBUS.—I will tell you.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,  
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;  
Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that  
The winds were love-sick with them: the oars were silver;  
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
The water, which they beat, to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,  
It beggar'd all description: she did lie  
In her pavilion (cloth of gold, of tissue),  
O'erpicturing that Venus, where we see  
The fancy outwork nature; on each side her  
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,  
With diverse-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem  
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,  
And what they undid, did.

AGRIPPA.— O, rare for Antony!

ENOBARBUS.—Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,  
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,  
And made their bends adornings; at the helm  
A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackle  
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,  
That yarely frame the office. From the barge  
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense  
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast  
Her people out upon her; and Antony,  
Bethroned in the market-place, did sit alone,  
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,  
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,  
And made a gap in nature.

It is said that the silver oars, "which to the tune of flutes kept stroke," were pierced with holes of different sizes, so mechanically contrived, that the water, as it flowed through them at every stroke, produced a harmony in concord with that of the flutes and lyres on board.

Such a description as the foregoing gives a more vivid idea than any grave declaration, of the elegant luxury of the Egyptians.

It were easy to collect instances from the Bible in which mention is made of Egyptian embroidery, but one verse (Ezek. xxvii. 7), when the prophet is addressing the Tyrians, specifically points to the subject on which we are speaking: "Fine linen, with brodered work from Egypt, was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail," &c.

A common but beautiful style of embroidery was to draw out entirely the threads of linen which formed the weft, and to re-form the body of the material, and vary its appearance, by working in various stitches and with different colours on the warp alone.

Chairs and fauteuils of the most elegant form, made of ebony and other rare woods, inlaid with ivory, were in common use amongst the ancient Egyptians. These were covered, as is the fashion in the present day, with every variety of rich stuff, stamped leather, &c.: but many were likewise embroidered with different coloured wools, with silk and gold thread. The couches too, which in the daytime had a rich covering substituted for the night bedding, gave ample scope for the display of the inventive genius and persevering industry of the busy-fingered Egyptian ladies.

We have given sufficient proof that the Egyptian females were accomplished in the art of needlework, and we may naturally infer that they were fond of it. It is a gentle and a social occupation, and usefully employs the time, whilst it does not interfere with the current of the thoughts or the flow of conversation. The Egyptians were an intelligent and an animated race; and the sprightly jest or

the lively sally would be interspersed with the graver details of thoughtful and reflective conversation, or would give some point to the dull routine of mere womanish chatter. It seems almost impossible to have lived amidst the stupendous magnificence of Egypt in days of yore, without the mind assimilating itself in some degree to the greatness with which it was surrounded. The vast deserts, the stupendous mountains, the river Nile—the single and solitary river which in itself sufficed the needs of a mighty empire—these majestic monuments of nature seemed as emblems to which the people should fashion, as they did fashion, their pyramids, their tombs, their sphynxes, their mighty reservoirs, and their colossal statues. And we can hardly suppose that such ever-visible objects should not, during the time of their creation, have some elevating influence on the weakest mind; and that therefore frivolity of conversation amongst the Egyptian ladies was rather the exception than the rule. But a modern author has amused himself, and exercised some ingenuity in attempting to prove the contrary:—

“Many similar instances of a talent for caricature are observable in the compositions of Egyptian artists who executed the paintings on the tombs; and the ladies are not spared. We are led to infer that they were not deficient in the talent of conversation; and the numerous subjects they proposed are shown to have been examined with great animation. Among these the question of dress was not forgotten, and the patterns or the value of trinkets were discussed with proportionate interest. The

maker of an earring, or the shop where it was purchased, were anxiously inquired; each compared the workmanship, the style, and the materials of those she wore, coveted her neighbour's, or preferred her own; and women of every class vied with each other in the display of 'jewels of silver and jewels of gold,' in the texture of their 'raiment,' the neatness of their sandals, and the arrangement or beauty of their plaited hair."

We are too much indebted to this author's interesting volumes to quarrel with him for his ungallant exposition of a very simple painting; but we beg to place in juxtaposition with the above (though otherwise somewhat out of its place) an extract from a work by no means characterised by unnecessary complacency to the fair sex.

" 'Cet homme passe sa vie à forger des nouvelles,' me dit alors un gros Athénien qui était assis auprès de moi. 'Il ne s'occupe que de choses qui ne le touchent point. Pour moi, mon intérieur me suffit. J'ai une femme que j'aime beaucoup;' et il me fit l'éloge de sa femme. 'Hier je ne pus pas souper avec elle, j'étais prié chez un de mes amis;' et il me fit la description du repas. 'Je me retirerai chez moi assez content. Mais j'ai fait cette nuit un rêve qui m'inquiète;' et il me raconta son rêve. Ensuite il me dit pesamment que la ville fourmillait d'étrangers; que les hommes d'aujourd'hui ne valaient pas ceux d'autrefois; que les denrées étaient à bas prix; qu'on pourrait espérer une bonne récolte, s'il venait à pleuvoir. Après m'avoir demandé le quantième du mois, il se leva pour aller souper avec sa femme."

## CHAPTER V.

## NEEDLEWORK OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.

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“——— Supreme  
 Sits the virtuous housewife,  
 The tender mother—  
 O’er the circle presiding,  
 And prudently guiding;  
 The girls gravely schooling  
 The boys wisely ruling;  
 Her hands never ceasing  
 From labours increasing;  
 And doubling his gains  
 With her orderly pains.  
 With piles of rich treasure the storehouse she spreads,  
 And winds round the loud-whirring spindle her threads:  
 She winds—till the bright-polish’d presses are full  
 Of the snow-white linen and glittering wool:  
 Blends the brilliant and solid in constant endeavour,  
 And resteth never.”

J. H. MERIVALE.

It was an admitted opinion amongst the classical nations of antiquity, that no less a personage than Minerva herself, “a maiden affecting old fashions and formality,” visited earth to teach her favourite nation the mysteries of those implements which are called “the arms of every virtuous woman;” viz. the distaff and spindle. In the use of these the Grecian dames were particularly skilled; in fact,



spinning, weaving, needlework, and embroidery, formed the chief occupation of those whose rank exonerated them, even in more primitive days, from the menial drudgery of a household.

The Greek females led exceedingly retired lives, being far more charily admitted to a share of the recreations of the nobler sex than we of these privileged days. The ancient Greeks were very magnificent—very: magnificent senators, magnificent warriors, magnificent men; but they were a people trained from the cradle for exhibition and publicity; domestic life was quite cast into the shade. Consequently and necessarily their women were thrown to greater distance, till it happened, naturally enough, that they seemed to form a distinct community; and apartments the most distant and secluded that the mansion afforded were usually assigned to them. Of these, in large establishments, certain ones were always appropriated to the labours of the needle.

“Je ne dirai” (says the sarcastic author of Anacharsis) “qu’un mot sur l’éducation des filles. Suivant le différence des états, elles apprennent à lire, écrire, coudre, filer, préparer la laine dont on fait les vêtements, et veiller aux soins du ménage. En général, les mères exhortent leurs filles à se conduire avec sagesse; mais elle insistent beaucoup plus sur la nécessité de se tenir droites, d’effacer leurs épaules, de serrer leur sein avec un large ruban, d’être extrêmement sobres, et de prévenir, par toutes sortes de moyens, un embonpoint qui nuirait à l’élégance de la taille et à la grâce des mouvemens.”

Homer, the great fountain of ancient lore, scarcely

throughout his whole work names a female, Greek or Trojan, but as connected naturally and indissolubly with this feminine occupation—needlework. Thus, when Chryses implores permission to ransom his daughter, Agamemnon wrathfully replies—

“ I will not loose thy daughter, till old age  
Find her far distant from her native soil,  
Beneath my roof in Argos, at her task  
Of tissue-work.”

And Iris, the “ambadress of Heaven,” finds Helen in her own recess—

“ ——— weaving there a gorgeous web,  
Inwrought with fiery conflicts, for her sake  
Wag’d by contending nations.”

Hector foreseeing the miseries consequent upon the destruction of Troy, says to Andromache—

“ But no grief  
So moves me as my grief for thee alone,  
Doom’d then to follow some imperious Greek,  
A weeping captive, to the distant shores  
Of Argos ; there to labour at the loom  
For a taskmistress.”

And again he says to her—

“ Hence, then, to our abode ; there weave or spin,  
And task thy maidens.”

And afterwards—

“ Andromache, the while,  
Knew nought, nor even by report had learn’d  
Her Hector’s absence in the field alone.  
She in her chamber at the palace-top  
A splendid texture wrought, on either side  
All dazzling bright with flow’rs of various hues.”

Though "Penelope's web" is become a proverb, it would be unpardonable here to omit specific mention of it. Antinoüs thus complains of her :—

"Elusive of the bridal day, she gives  
Fond hope to all, and all with hope deceives.  
Did not the Sun, through heaven's wide azure roll'd,  
For three long years the royal fraud behold?  
While she, laborious in delusion, spread  
The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread;  
Where, as to life the wondrous figures rise,  
Thus spoke th' inventive queen with artful sighs :—  
' Though cold in death Ulysses breathes no more,  
Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour;  
Cease, till to great Laertes I bequeath  
A task of grief, his ornaments of death.  
Lest, when the Fates his royal ashes claim,  
The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame :  
When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,  
Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade.'  
Thus she : At once the generous train complies,  
Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.  
The work she plied ; but, studious of delay,  
By night revers'd the labours of the day.  
While thrice the Sun his annual journey made,  
The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd ;  
Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ;  
The fourth, her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.  
We saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,  
The backward labours of her faithless hand.  
Then urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils ;  
A wondrous monument of female wiles."

The Greek costume was rich and elegant ; and though, from our familiarity with colourless statues, we are apt to suppose it gravely uniform in its hue, such was not the fact ; for the tunic was often adorned with ornamental embroidery of all sorts. The toga was the characteristic of Roman costume : this gradually assumed variations from its primitive



simplicity of hue, until at length the triumphant general considered even the royal purple too unpretending, unless set off by a rich embroidery of gold. The first embroideries of the Romans were but bands of stuff, cut or twisted, which they put on the dresses: the more modest used only one band; others two, three, four, up to seven; and from the number of these the dresses took their names, always drawn from the Greek: *molo*res, *dilo*res, *trilo*res, *tetra*lores, &c.

Pliny seems to be the authority whence most writers derive their accounts of ancient garments and needlework.

“The coarse rough wool with the round great haire hath been of ancient time highly commended and accounted of in tapestrie worke: for even Homer himself witnesseth that they of the old world used the same much, and tooke great delight therein. But this tapestrie is set out with colours in France after one sort, and among the Parthians after another. M. Varro writeth that within the temple of Sanguis there continued unto the time that he wrote his booke the wooll that lady Tanaquil, otherwise named Caia Cecilia, spun; together with her distaff and spindle: as also within the chapel of Fortune, the very roiall robe or mantle of estate, made in her own hands after the manner of water chamlot in wave worke, which Servius Tullius used to weare. And from hence came the fashion and custome at Rome, that when maidens were to be wedded, there attended upon them a distaffe, dressed and trimmed with kombed wooll, as also a spindle and yearne upon it. The said Tanaquil was the

first that made the coat or cassocke woven right out all through; such as new beginners (namely young souldiers, barristers, and fresh brides) put on under their white plaine gowns, without any guard of purple. The waved water chamelot was from the beginning esteemed the richest and bravest wearing. And from thence came the branched damaske in broad workes. Fenestella writeth that in the latter time of Augustus Cæsar they began at Rome to use their gownes of cloth shorne, as also with a curled nap.—As for those robes which are called crebræ and papaveratæ, wrought thicke with floure worke, resembling poppies, or pressed even and smooth, they be of greater antiquitie: for even in the time of Lucilius the poet Torquatus was noted and reproved for wearing them. The long robes embrodered before, called prætextæ, were devised first by the Tuscanes. The Trabeæ were roiall robes, and I find that kings and princes only ware them. In Homer's time also they used garments embrodered with imagerie and floure, work, and from thence came the triumphant robes. As for embroderie itselſe and needle-worke, it was the Phrygians invention: and hereupon embroderers in Latine bee called phrygiones. And in the same Asia king Attalus was the first that devised cloth of gold: and thence come such colours to be called Attalica. In Babylon they used much to weave their cloth of divers colours, and this was a great wearing amongst them, and cloths so wrought were called Babylonica. To weave cloth of tissue with twisted threeds both in woofe and warpe, and the same of sundrie colours, was the invention of Alexandria;

and such clothes and garments were called Polymita, But Fraunce devised the scutchion, square, or lozenge damaske worke. Metellus Scipio, among other challenges and imputations laid against Capito reproached and accused him for this:—‘That his hangings and furniture of his dining chamber, being Babylonian work or cloth of Arras, were sold for 800,000 sesterces; and such like of late days stood Prince Nero in 400,000 sesterces, *i. e.* forty millions.’ The embrodered long robes of Servius Tullius, wherewith he covered and arraid all over the image of Fortune, by him dedicated, remained whole and sound until the end of Sejanus. And a wonder it was that they neither fell from the image nor were motheaten in 560 yeares.”\*

It was long before silk was in general use, even for patrician garments. It has been supposed that the famous Median vest, invented by Semiramis, was silken, which might account for its great fame in the west. Be this as it may, it was so very graceful, that the Medes adopted it after they had conquered Asia; and the Persians followed their example. In the time of the Romans the price of silk was weight for weight with gold, and the first persons who brought silk into Europe were the Greeks of Alexander’s army. Under Tiberius it was forbidden to be worn by men; and it is said that the Emperor Aurelian even refused the earnest request of his empress for a silken dress, on the plea of its extravagant cost. Heliogabalus was the first man that ever wore a robe entirely of silk. He had also a tunic woven of gold threads; such

\* Book viii. chap. 48.

gold thread as we referred to in a prior chapter, as consisting of the metal alone beaten out and rounded, without any intermixture of silk or woollen. Tarquinius Priscus had also a vest of this gorgeous description, as had likewise Agrippina. Gold thread and wire continued to be made entirely of metal probably until the time of Aurelian, nor have there been any instances found in Herculaneum and Pompeii of the silken thread with a gold coating.

These examples will suffice to show that it was not usually the *material* of the ancient garments which gave them so high a value, but the ornamental embellishments with which they were afterwards invested by the needle.

The Medes and Babylonians seem to have been most highly celebrated for their stuffs and tapestries of various sorts which were figured by the needle; the Egyptians certainly rivalled, though they did not surpass them; and the Greeks seem also to have attained a high degree of excellence in this pretty art. The epoch of embroidery amongst the Romans went as far back as Tarquin, to whom the Etruscans presented a tunic of purple enriched with gold, and a mantle of purple and other colours, "*tels qu'en portoient les rois de Perse et de Lydie.*" But soon luxury banished the wonted austerity of Rome; and when Cæsar first showed himself in a habit embroidered and fringed, this innovation appeared scandalous to those who had not been alarmed at any of his real and important innovations.

We have referred in a former chapter to the

practice of sending garments as presents, as marks of respect and friendship, or as propitiatory or deprecatory offerings. And the illustrious ladies of the classical times had such a prophetic talent of preparation, that they were ever found possessed, when occasion required, of store of garments richly embroidered by their own fair fingers, or under their auspices. Of this there are numerous examples in Homer.

When Priam wishes to redeem the body of Hector, after preparing other propitiatory gifts,

“ — he open’d wide the sculptur’d lids  
Of various chests, whence mantles twelve he took  
Of texture beautiful ; twelve single cloaks ;  
As many carpets, with as many robes ;  
To which he added vests an equal store.”

When Telemachus is about to leave Menelaus—

“ The beauteous queen revolv’d with careful eyes  
Her various textures of unnumber’d dyes,  
And chose the largest ; with no vulgar art  
Her own fair hands embroider’d every part :  
Beneath the rest it lay divinely bright,  
Like radiant Hesper o’er the gems of night.”

That much of this work was highly beautiful may be inferred from the description of the robe of Ulysses :—

“ In the rich woof a hound, Mosaic drawn,  
Bore on full stretch, and seiz’d a dappled fawn ;  
Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold ;  
They pant and struggle in the moving gold.”

And this robe, Penelope says,

“ In happier hours her artful hand employ’d.”

To invest a visitor with an embroidered robe was



considered the very highest mark of honour and regard.

When Telemachus is at the magnificent court of Menelaus—

“ ——— a bright damsel train attend the guests  
With liquid odours and *embroider'd vests*.”

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“ Give to the stranger guest a stranger's dues :  
Bring gold, a pledge of love ; a talent bring,  
*A vest, a robe.*”

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“ ——— in order roll'd  
The robes, the vests are rang'd, and heaps of gold :  
And adding *a rich dress inwrought with art*,  
A gift expressive of her bounteous heart,  
Thus spoke (the queen) to Ithacus.”

When Cambyses wished to attain some point from an Ethiopian prince, he forwarded, amongst other presents, a rich vest. The Ethiopian, taking the garment, inquired what it was, and how it was made ; but its glittering tracery did not decoy the unsophisticated prince. When Xerxes arrived at Acanthos, he interchanged the rites of hospitality with the people, and presented several with Median vests. Probably our readers will remember the circumstance of Alexander making the mother of Darius a present of some rich vestures, probably of woollen fabrics, and telling her that she might make her grandchildren learn the art of weaving them ; at which the royal lady felt insulted and deeply hurt, as it was considered ignominious by the Persian women to work in wool. Hearing of her misapprehension, Alexander himself waited on her, and in the gentlest and most respectful terms told the illustrious captive that, far from meaning



any offence, the custom of his own country had misled him; and that the vestments he had offered were not only a present from his royal sisters, but wrought by their own hands.

Outré as appear some of the flaring patterns of the present day, the boldest of them must be *quiet* and unattractive compared with those we read of formerly, when not only human figures, but birds and animals, were wrought not merely on hangings and carpets but on wearing apparel. Ciampini gives various instances.\*

What changes, says he, do not a long course of years produce! Who now, except in the theatre, or at a carnival or masquerade (*spectaculis ac rebus ludiciis*), would endure garments inscribed with verses and titles, and painted with various figures? Nevertheless, it is plain that such garments were constantly used in ancient times. To say nothing of Homer, who assigns to Ulysses a tunic variegated with figures of animals; to say nothing of the Massagetæ, whom Herodotus relates painted animals on their garments with the juice of herbs; we also read of these garments (though then considered very antiquated) being used under the Cæsars of Rome.

They say that Alcisthenes the Sybarite had a garment of such magnificence that when he exhibited it in the Temple of Juno at Lacinium, where all Italy was congregated, it attracted universal attention. It was purchased from the Carthaginians, by Dionysius the elder, for 120 talents. It was twenty-two feet in breadth, of a purple ground,

\* Ciampini, *Vetera Monimenta*, cap. xiii.

with animals wrought all over, except in the middle, where were Jupiter, Juno, Themis, Minerva, Apollo, Venus : on one sleeve it had a figure of Alcisthenes, on the other of his city Sybaris.

That this description is not exaggerated may be inferred from the following passage from a homily on Dives and Lazarus by a Bishop of Amuasan in Pontus, given by Ciampini.

“ They have here no bounds to this foolish art, for no sooner was invented the useless art of weaving in figures in a kind of picture, such as animals of all sorts, than (rich persons) procure flowered garments, and also those variegated with an infinite number of images, both for themselves, their wives, and children. . . . . Whensoever thus clothed they go abroad, they go, as it were, painted all over, and pointing out to one another with the finger the pictures on their garments.

“ For there are lions and panthers, and bears and bulls, and dogs and woods, and rocks and huntsmen ; and, in a word, everything that can be thought of, all drawn to the life : for it was necessary, forsooth, that not only the walls of their houses should be painted, but their coats (tunica) also, and likewise the cloak (pallium) which covers it.

“ The more pious of these gentry take their subjects from the Gospel history : *e. g.* Christ himself with his disciples, or one of the miracles, is depicted. In this manner you shall see the marriage of Cana and the waterpots ; the paralytic carrying his bed on his shoulders ; the blind man cured by clay ; the woman with the issue of blood taking hold of the border (of Christ’s garment) ; the harlot falling at

the feet of Jesus ; Lazarus coming from the tomb ; and they fancy there is great piety in all this, and that putting on such garments must be pleasing to God."

The palmated garment was figured with palm-leaves, and was a triumphal or festive garment. It is referred to in an epistle of Gratian to Augustus : "I have sent thee a palmated garment, in which the name of our divine parent Constantine is interwoven."

In allusion to these lettered garments Ausonius celebrates Sabina (*textrice simul ac poetria*), whose name thus lives when those of more important personages are forgotten :—

They who both webs and verses weave,  
The first to thee, O chaste Minerva, leave ;  
The latter to the Muses they devote :  
To me, Sabina, it appears a sin  
To separate two things so near akin,  
So I have wrote thy verses on my coat.\*

And again :

Whether the Tyrian robe your praise demand,  
Or the neat verse upon the edge desried,  
Know both proceed from the same skilful hand :  
In both these arts Sabina takes a pride.†

It is imagined that the embroidered vestments

\* "*Licia qui texunt, et Carmina ; Carmina Musis,  
Licia contribuunt, casta, Minerva tibi.  
Ast ego rem sociam non dissociabo, Sabina,  
Versibus inscripsi, quæ mea texta meis.*"

† "*Sive probas Tyrio textam sub tegmine vestem,  
Seu placet inscripti commoditas tituli.  
Ipsius hæc Dominae concennat utrumque venustas :  
Has geminas artes una Sabina colet.*"

worn in Homer's time bore a strong resemblance to those now worn by the Moguls; and the custom of making presents, so discernible through his work, still prevails throughout Asia. It is not (says Sir James Forbes) so much the custom in India to present dresses ready made to the visitors as to offer the materials, especially to Europeans. In Turkey, Persia, and Arabia, it is generally the reverse. We find in Chardin that the kings of Persia had great wardrobes, where there were always many hundred habits, sorted, ready for presents, and that more than forty tailors were always employed in this service.

It is not improbable that this ancient custom of presenting a visitor with a new dress as a token of welcome, a symbol of rejoicing at his presence, may have led to many of the general customs which have prevailed, and do still, of having new clothes at any season of joy or festivity. New clothes are thought by the people of the East *requisite* for the due solemnization of a time of rejoicing. The Turks, even the poorest of them, would submit to any privation rather than be without new clothes at the Bairam or Great Festival. There is an anecdote recorded of the Caliph Montanser Billah, that going one day to the upper roof of his palace he saw a number of clothes spread out on the flat roofs of the houses of Bagdat. He asked the reason, and was told that the inhabitants of Bagdat were drying their clothes, which they had newly washed, on account of the approach of the Bairam. The caliph was so concerned that any should be so poor as to be obliged to wash their old clothes for want of new

ones with which to celebrate this festival, that he ordered a great quantity of gold to be instantly made into bullets, proper to be shot out of cross-bows, which he and his courtiers threw, by this means, upon every terrace of the city where he saw garments spread to dry.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## THE DARK AGES.—“SHEE-SCHOOLS.”

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“ There was an auncient house not far away,  
 Renown'd throughout the world for sacred lore  
 And pure unspotted life: so well they say  
 It govern'd was, and guided evermore  
 Through wisdom of a matrone grave and hore,  
 Whose onely joy was to relieve the needes  
 Of wretched soules, and helpe the helplesse pore:  
 All night she spent in bidding of her bedes,  
 And all the day in doing good and godly dedes.”

FAERIE QUEENE.

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“ Meantime, whilst monks' *pens* were thus employed, nuns with their *needles* wrote histories also: that of *Christ his passion* for their altar-clothes; and other Scripture- (and more legend-) stories in hangings to adorn their houses.”

FULLER, CH. HIST., B. 6.

NEEDLEWORK is an art so indissolubly connected with the convenience and comfort of mankind at large, that it is impossible to suppose any state of society in which it has not existed. Its modes varied, of course, according to the lesser or greater degrees



of refinement in other matters with which it was connected; and when we find from Muratori that “*nulla s’è detto finqui dell’Arte del Tessere dopo la declinazione del Romano Imperio; e solo in fuggire s’è parlato di alcune vesti degli antichi,*” we may fairly infer that the *ornamental* needlework of the time was not extensively encouraged, although never entirely laid aside.

The desolation that overran the world was found alike in its greatest or most insignificant concerns; and the same torrent that swept monarchs from their thrones and peers from their halls did away with the necessity for professors of the decorative arts. There needed not the embroiderer of gold and purple to blazon the triumph of a conqueror who disdained other habiliment than the skin of some slaughtered beast.\*

The matron who yet retained the principle of Roman virtue, or the fair and refined maiden of the eastern capital, far from seeking personal adornment, rather shunned any decoration which might attract the eyes and inflame the passions of untamed and ruthless conquerors. All usual habits were subverted, and for long years the history of the European world is but a bloody record of war and tumult, of bloodshed and strife. Few are the cases of peace and tranquillity in this desert of tumult and blood-guiltiness; but those few “isles of the blessed” in this ocean of discord, those few sunny spots in the gloomy landscape, are intimately connected with our theme. The use of the needle for the daily

\* “In the most inclement winter the hardy German was satisfied with a scanty garment made of the skin of some animal.”—GIBBON.

necessities of life could never, as we have remarked, be superseded; but the practice of ornamental needlework, in common with every ennobling science and improving art, was kept alive during this period of desolation by the church, and by the individual labours and collective zeal of the despised and condemned monks.

Sharing that hallowed influence which hovered over and protected the church at this fearful season—for, from the carelessness or superstition of the barbarians, the ministers of religion were spared—nunneries, with some few exceptions, were now like refuges pointed out by Heaven itself. They were originally founded by the sister of St. Anthony, the hermit of the Egyptian desert, and in their primitive institution were meant solely for those who, abjuring the world for religious motives, were desirous to spend their whole time in devotional exercises. But their sphere of utility became afterwards widely extended. They became safe and peaceable asylums for all those to whom life's pilgrimage had been too thorny. The frail but repentant maiden was here sheltered from the scorn of an uncharitable world; the virtuous but suffering female, whose earthly hopes had, from whatever cause, been crushed, could here weep and pray in peace: while she to whom the more tangible trouble of poverty had descended might here, without the galling yoke of charity and dependence, look to a refuge for those evil days when the breaking of the golden bowl, the loosing of the silver cord, should disable her from the exertions necessary for her maintenance.

Have we any—ay, with all their faults and im-

perfections on their heads—have we, in these days of enlightenment, any sort of substitute for the blessings they held out to dependent and suffering woman of whatever rank?

Convents became also schools for the education of young women of rank, who here imbibed in early youth principles of religion which might enable them to endure with patience and fortitude those after-trials of life from which no station or wealth could exempt them; and they acquired here those accomplishments, and were taught here those lighter occupations, amongst which fine needlework and embroidery occupied a conspicuous position, which would qualify them to beguile in a becoming manner the many hours of leisure which their elevated rank would confer on them.

“Nunneries,” says Fuller, “also were good shee-schools, wherein the girles and maids of the neighbourhood were taught to read and work; and sometimes a little Latine was taught them therein. Yea, give me leave to say, if such feminine foundations had still continued, provided no *vow* were obtruded upon them (virginity is least kept where it is most constrained), haply the weaker sex (besides the avoiding modern inconveniences) might be heightened to an higher perfection than hitherto hath been attained. That sharpnesse of their wits and suddenness of their conceits (which their enemies must allow unto them) might by education be improved into a judicious solidity, and that adorned with arts which now they want, not because they cannot learn, but are not taught them. I say, if such feminine foundations were extant now of dayes,

haply some virgins of highest birth would be glad of such places, and I am sure their fathers and elder brothers would not be sorry for the same.”

Miss Lawrance gives a more detailed account of the duties taught in them. “In consequence of convents being considered as establishments exclusively belonging to the Latin church, Protestant writers, as by common consent, have joined in censuring them, forgetful of the many benefits which, without any reference to their peculiar creed, they were calculated to confer. Although providing instruction for the young, the convent was a large establishment for various orders of women. There were the nuns, the lay sisters, always a numerous class, and a large body of domestics; while in those higher convents, where the abbess exercised manorial jurisdiction, there were seneschal, esquires, gentlemen, yeomen, grooms, indeed the whole establishment of a baronial castle, except the men-at-arms and the archer-band. Thus within the convent walls the pupil saw nearly the same domestic arrangement to which she had been accustomed in her father’s castle; while, instead of being constantly surrounded with children, well born and intelligent women might be her occasional companions. And then the most important functions were exercised by women. The abbess presided in her manorial court, the cellaress performed the extensive offices of steward, the præcentrix led the singing and superintended the library, and the infirmaress watched over the sick, affording them alike spiritual and medical aid. Thus, from her first admission, the pupil was taught to respect and to

emulate the talents of women. But a yet more important peculiarity did the convent school present. It was a noble, a well-endowed, and an independent institution; and it proffered education as a boon. Here was no eager canvassing for scholars, no promises of unattainable advantages; for the convent school was not a mercantile establishment, nor was education a trade. The female teachers of the middle ages were looked up to alike by parent and child, and the instruction so willingly offered was willingly and gratefully received; the character of the teacher was elevated, and as a necessary consequence so was the character of the pupil.”

But in addition to those inmates who had dedicated their lives to religion, and those who were placed there specifically for education, convents afforded shelter to numbers who sought only temporary retirement from the world under the influence of sorrow, or temporary protection under the apprehension of danger. And this was the case not merely through the very dark era with which our chapter commences, but for centuries afterwards, and when the world was comparatively civilized. Our own “good Queen Maude” assumed the veil in the convent of Romsey, without however taking the vows, as the only means of escaping from a forced marriage; and in the subsequent reign, that of Stephen, so little regard was paid to law or decorum, that a convent was the only place where a maiden, even of gentle birth, if she had riches, could have a chance of shelter and safety from the machinations of those who resorted to any sort of bru-



tality or violence to compel her to a marriage which would secure her possessions to her ravisher.

It was then in the convents, and in them alone, that, during the barbarism and confusion consequent upon the overthrow of the ancient empire, and the irruption of the untamed hordes who overran southern Europe from the north and west,—it was in the convents that some remnants of the ancient art of embroidery were still preserved. The nuns considered it an acceptable service to employ their time and talents in the construction of vestments which, being intended for the service of the church, were rich and sumptuous even at the time when richness and elegance of apparel were unknown elsewhere.\* It was no proof of either the ignorance or the bad taste or the irreligion of the “*dark*” ages, that the religious edifices were fitted up with a rich and gorgeous solemnity which are unheard of in these days of light and knowledge and economy. And besides the construction of rich and elaborately ornamented vestments for the priests, and hangings for the altars, shrines, &c., besides these being peculiarly the occupation of the professed sisters of religious houses, it was likewise the pride and the delight of ladies of rank to devote both their money to the purchase and their time to the embroidering of sacerdotal garments as offerings to the church.

\* Muratori (Diss. 25), speaking of the mean habiliments usual in Italy even so late as the 13th century, adds, “Ma non per questo s’hanno a credere così rozzi e nemici del Lussa que’ Secoli. A buon conto anche in Italia qui non era cieco, sovente potea mirare i più delicati lavori di Seta, che *servivano di ornamenti alle Chiese e alle sacre funzioni.*”



And whether temporarily sheltering within the walls of a convent, or happily presiding in her own lofty halls, it was oftentime the pride and pleasure of the high-born dame to embroider a splendid cope, a rich vest, or a gorgeous hanging, as a votive and grateful offering to that holy altar where perhaps she had prayed in sorrow, and found consolation and peace.

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## CHAPTER VII.

## NEEDLEWORK OF THE DARK AGES.

"Last night I dreamt a dream; behold!  
 I saw a church was fret with gold,  
     With arras richly dight:  
 There saw I altar, pall, and pix,  
 Chalice, and font, and crucifix,  
     And tapers burning bright."

W. S. ROSE.

OVER those memorials of the past which chance and mischance have left us, time hath drawn a thick curtain, obliterating all soft and gentle touches, which connected harmoniously the bolder features of the landscape, and leaving these but as landmarks to intimate what had been there. We would fain linger on those times, and call up the gentle spirits of the long departed to describe scenes of quiet but useful retirement at which we now only dimly guess. We would witness the hour of recreation in the convent, when the severer duties of the cloister gave place to the cheerful one of companionship; and the "pale votary" quitted the lonely cell and the solitary vigil, to instruct the blooming novice in the art of embroidery, or to ply her own accustomed and

accomplished fingers in its fairy creations. The younger ones would be ecstatic in their commendations, and eager in their exertions to rival the fair sempstress; whilst a gratified though sad smile would brighten her own pale cheek as the lady abbess laid aside the richly illuminated volume by which her own attention had been engrossed, and from which she had from time to time read short and instructive passages aloud, commenting on and enforcing the principles they inculcated; and holding the work towards the casement, so that the bright slanting rays of the setting sun which fell through the richly carved lattice might illumine the varied tints of the stitchery, she would utter some kind and encouraging words of admiration and praise.

Perhaps the work was a brodered scarf for some spiritual father, a testimony of gratitude and esteem from the convent at large; perhaps it was a tunic or a girdle which some high and wealthy lady had bespoken for an offering, and which the meek and pious sisterhood were happy to do for hire, bestowing the proceeds on the necessities of the convent; or, if those were provided, on charity. Perhaps it was a pair of sandals, so magnificently wrought as to be destined as a present by some lofty abbot to the pope himself, like those which Robert, Abbot of St. Alban's, sent to the Pope Adrian the Fourth; and which alone, out of a multitude of the richest offerings, the pope retained;

\* When Robert, Abbot of St. Alban's, visited his countryman Pope Adrian the Fourth, he made him several valuable presents, and amongst other things three mitres and a pair of sandals of most admirable workmanship. His holiness refused his other presents, but

or if it were in England (for our domestic scene will apply to all the Christian world) it might be a magnificent covering for the high altar, with a scripture history embroidered in the centre, and the border, of regal purple, inwrought with gold and precious stones. We say, *if in England*, because so celebrated was the English work, the *Opus Anglicum*,\* that other nations eagerly desired to possess it. The embroidered vestments of some English clergymen were so much admired at the Papal Court, that the Pope, asking where they had been made, and being told "in England," despatched bulls to several English abbots, commanding them to procure similar ones for him. Some of the vestments of these days were almost covered with gold and precious stones.

Or it might be a magnificent pall, in the days in which this garment had lost its primitive character, that taxed the skill and the patience of the fair needlewoman. It was about the year A. D. 601 that Pope Gregory sent two archbishop's palls into England; the one for London, which see was afterwards removed to Canterbury, and the other to York. Fuller gives the following account of this garment primitively:—

"The pall is a pontifical vestment, considerable for the matter, making, and mysteries thereof. For

thankfully accepted of the mitres and sandals, being charmed with their exquisite beauty. These admired pieces of embroidery were the work of Christina, Abbess of Markgate.

† "*Anglicæ nationis femina multum acu et auri textura, egregie viri in omni valeant artificio. Però fu renomato Opus Anglicum.*"

FROM MURATORI.

the matter, it is made of lamb's-wooll and superstition. I say, *of lamb's-wooll, as it comes from the sheep's back, without any other artificiall colour*, spun (say some) by a peculiar order of nunnes, *first cast into the tombe of St. Peter*, taken from his body (say others); surely most sacred if from both; and (superstitiously) adorned with little black crosses. For the form thereof, the *breadth exceeded not three fingers* (one of our bachelor's lamb-skin hoods in Cambridge would make three of them), *having two labells hanging down before and behind*, which the archbishops onely, when going to the altar, put about their necks, above their other pontificall ornaments. Three mysteries were couched therein. First, humility, which beautifies the clergy above all their costly copes; secondly, innocency, to imitate lamb-like simplicitie; and thirdly, industry, to follow him who fetched his wandering sheep home on his shoulders. But to speak plainly, the mystery of mysteries in this pall was, that the archbishops receiving it showed therein their dependence on Rome; and a mote in this manner ceremoniously taken was a sufficient acknowledgment of their subjection. And, as it owned Rome's power, so in after ages it increased their profit. For, though now such palls were freely given to archbishops, whose places in Britain for the present were rather cumbersome than commodious, having little more than their paines for their labour; yet in after ages the archbishop of Canterburie's pall was sold for five thousand florenes:\* so that the Pope might well have the

\* A florene is 4s. 6d.

Golden Fleece, if he could sell all his lamb's-wooll at that rate."\*

The accounts of the rich embroidered ecclesiastical vestments—robes, sandals, girdles, tunics, vests, palls, cloaks, altar-cloths, and veils or hangings of various descriptions, common in churches in the dark ages—would almost surpass belief, if the minuteness with which they are enumerated in some few ancient authors did not attest the fact. Still these in the most diffuse writers are a mere catalogue of church properties, and, as such, would, in the dry detail, be but little interesting to our readers. There is enough said of them, however, to attest their variety, their beauty, their magnificence ; and to impress one with a very favourable idea of the female ingenuity and perseverance of those days. The cost of many of these garments was enormous, for pearls and precious jewels were literally interwrought, and the time and labour bestowed on them was almost incredible. It was no uncommon circumstance for three years to be spent even by these assiduous and indefatigable votaries of the needle on one garment. But it is only casually, in the pages of the antiquarian, that there is any record of them :—

“ With their names

No bard embalms and sanctifies his song :

And history, so warm on meaner themes,

Is cold on this.”

“ Noi” (says Muratori) “che ammiriamo, e con

\* “ The pall was a bishop's vestment, going over the shoulders, made of sheep-skin, in memory of him who sought the lost sheep, and when he had found it laid it on his shoulders ; and it was embroidered with crosses, and taken off the body or coffin of St. Peter.”

CAMDEN.



ragione, la beltà e varietà di tante drapperie dei nostri tempi, abbiám nondimeno da confessare un obbligo non lieve a gli antichi, che ci hanno prima spianata la via, e senza i lumi loro non potremmo oggidi vantare un sì gran progresso nell' Arti."

And that this was the case a few instances may suffice to show ; and it may not be quite out of place here to refer to one out of a thousand articles of value and beauty which were lost in the great conflagration ("which so cruelly laid waste the habitations of the servants of God") of the doomed and often suffering, but always magnificent, Croyland Abbey. It was "that beautiful and costly sphere, most curiously constructed of different metals, according to the different planets. Saturn was of copper, Jupiter of gold, Mars of iron, the Sun of brass, Mercury of amber, Venus of tin, and the Moon of silver : the colours of all the signs of the Zodiac had their several figures and colours variously finished, and adorned with such a mixture of precious stones and metals as amused the eye, while it informed the mind of every beholder. Such another sphere was not known or heard of in England ; and it was a present from the King of France."

No insignificant proof this of the mechanical skill of the eleventh century.

We are told that Pope Eutychianus, who lived in the reign of the Emperor Aurelian, buried in different places 342 martyrs with his own hands ; and he ordained that a faithful martyr should on no account be interred without a dalmatic robe or a purple colobio. This is perhaps one of the earliest notices of ecclesiastical pomp or pride in vestments.

But some forty years afterwards Pope Silvester was invested by the hands of his attendants with a Phrygian robe of snowy white, on which was traced in sparkling threads by busy female hands the resurrection of our Lord; and so magnificent was this garment considered that it was ordained to be worn by his successors on state occasions: and to pass at once to the seventh century, there are records of various church hangings which had become injured by old age being carefully repaired at considerable expense; which expense and trouble would not, we may fairly infer, have been incurred if the articles in question, even at this more advanced period, had not been considered of value and of beauty.

Leo the Third, in the eighth century, was a magnificent benefactor to the church. With the vessels of rich plate and jewels of various descriptions which were in all ages offering to the church we have nothing to do: amongst various other vestments, Leo gave to the high altar of the blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, a covering spangled with gold (*chrysoclabam*) and adorned with precious stones; having the histories both of our Saviour giving to the blessed Apostle Peter the power of binding and loosing, and also representing the suffering of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and Paul. It was of great size, and exhibited on St. Peter and St. Paul's days.\*

\* Anastasius Bibliothecarius. De Vitis Romanorum Pontificum.

As this work is the fountain whence subsequent writers have chiefly obtained their information with regard to church vestments, that is to say, decorative ones, it may not be amiss to transcribe a passa

Pope Paschal, early in the ninth century, had some magnificent garments wrought, which he presented to different churches. One of these was an altar-cloth of Tyrian purple, having in the middle a picture of golden emblems, with the countenance of our Lord, and of the blessed martyrs Cosman and Damian, with three other brothers. The cross was wrought in gold, and had round it a border of olive-leaves most beautifully worked. Another had golden emblems, with our Saviour, surrounded with archangels and apostles, of wonderful beauty and richness, being ornamented with pearls.

In these ages robes and hangings with crimson

taken literally at random from scores of similar ones. It will give the reader some idea of the profusion with which the expensive garnitures were supplied:—

“Sed et super altare majus fecit tetra vela holoserica alithina quatuor, cum astillis, et rosis chrysoclabis. Et in eodem altare fecit cum historiis crucifixi Domini vestem tyriam. Et in Ecclesia Doctoris Mundi beati Pauli Apostoli tetra vela holoserica alithyna quatuor, et vestem super altare albam chrysoclabam, habentem historiam Sanctæ Resurrectionis, et aliam vestem chrysoclabam, habentem historiam nativitatis Domini, et Sanctorum Innocentium. Immo et aliam vestem tyriam, habentem historiam cæci illuminati, et Resurrectionem. Idem autem sanctissimus Præsul fecit in basilica beatæ Mariæ ad Præsepe vestem albam chrysoclabam, habentem historiam sanctæ Resurrectionis. Sed et aliam vestem in orbiculis chrysoclabis, habentem historias Annunciationis, et sanctorum Joachim, et Annæ. Fecit in Ecclesia beati Laurentii foris muros eidem Præsul vestem albam rosatam cum chrysoclabo. Sed et aliam vestem super sanctum corpus ejus albam destauraci chrysoclabam, cum margaritis. Et in titulo Calixti vestem chrysoclabam ex blattin Byzantæo, habentem historiam nativitatis Domini, et sancti Simeonis. Item in Ecclesia sancti Pancratii vestem tyriam, habentem historiam Ascensionis Domini, seu et in sancta Maria ad Martyres fecit vestem tyriam ut supra. Et in basilica sanctorum Cosmæ et Damiani fecit vestem de blatti Byzantæo, cum periclysin de chrysoclabo, et margaritis.”—i. 285.

or purple borders, called *blatta*, from the name of the insect from which the dye was obtained, were much in use. An insect, supposed to be the one so often referred to by this name in the writings of the ancients, is found now on the coasts of Guayaquil and Guatima. The dye is very beautiful, and is easily transferred. The royal purple so much esteemed of old was of very different shades, for the terms purple, red, crimson, scarlet, are often used indiscriminately; and a pretty correct conception may be acquired of the value of this imperial tint formerly from the circumstance that, when Alexander took possession of the city of Susa and of its enormous treasures, among other things there were found five thousand quintals of Hermione purple, the finest in the world, which had been treasured up there during the space of 190 years; notwithstanding which, its beauty and lustre were no way diminished. Some idea may be formed of the prodigious value of this store from the fact that this purple was sold at the rate of 100 crowns a pound, and the quintal is a hundredweight of Paris.

Pope Paschal had a robe worked with gold and gems, having the history of the Virgins with lighted torches beautifully related: he had another of Byzantine scarlet with a worked border of olive-leaves. This was a very usual decoration of ecclesiastical robes, and a very suitable one; for, from the time when in the beak of Noah's dove it was first an emblem of comfort, it has ever, in all ages, in all nations, at all times, been symbolical of plenty and peace. This pope had also a robe of woven gold, worn over a cassock of scarlet silk; a dress certainly worth the naming, though not so much as others

indebted to our useful little implement which Cowper calls the "threaded steel." But he had another rich and peculiar garment, which was entirely indebted to the needle-woman for its varied and radiant hues. This was a robe of an amber colour,\* *having peacocks*.

Pope Leo the Fourth had a hanging worked with the needle, having the portrait of a man seated upon a peacock. Pope Stefano the Fifth had four magnificent hangings for the great altar, one of which was wrought in peacocks. We find in romance that there was a high emblematical value attached to peacocks; not so high, however, as to prevent our ancestors from eating them; but it is difficult to account for their being so frequently introduced in designs professedly religious. In romance and chivalry they were supereminent. "To mention the peacock (says M. Le Grand) is to write its panegyrick." Many noble families bore the peacock as their crest; and in the Provençal Courts of Love the successful poet was crowned with a wreath formed of them. The coronation present given to the Queen of our Henry the Third, by her sister, the Queen of France, was a large silver peacock, whose train was set with sapphires and pearls, and other precious jewels, wrought with silver. This elegant piece of jewellery was used as a reservoir for sweet waters, which were forced out of its beak into a basin of white silver chased.

As the knights associated these birds with all their ideas of fame, and made their most solemn

\* "De staurace."



vows over them, the highest honours were conferred on them. Their flesh is celebrated as the “nutriment of lovers,” and the “viand of worthies;” and a peacock was always the most distinguished dish at the solemn banquets of princes or nobles. On these occasions it was served up on a golden dish, and carried to table by a lady of rank, attended by a train of high-born dames and damsels, and accompanied by music. If it was on the occasion of a tournament, the successful knight always carved it, so regulating his portions that each individual, be the company ever so numerous, might taste. For the oath, the knight rising from his seat and extending his hand over the bird, vowed some daring enterprise of arms or love:—“I vow to God, to the blessed Virgin, to the dames, and to the *peacock*, &c. &c.”

In later and less imaginative times, the peacock, though still a favourite dish at a banquet, seems to have been regarded more from its affording “good eating” than from any more refined attribute. Massinger speaks of

“ the carcasses  
Of three fat wethers bruised for gravy, to  
Make sauce for a single peacock.”

In Shakspeare’s time the bird was usually put into a pie, the head, richly gilt, being placed at one end of the dish, and the tail, spread out in its full circumference, at the other. And alas! for the degeneracy of those days. The solemn and knightly adjuration of former times had even then dwindled into the absurd oath which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Justice Shallow:—



“ By cock and pye, Sir, you shall not away to night.”

In some of the French tapestries birds of all shapes, natural and unnatural, of all sizes and in all positions, form very important parts of the subjects themselves; though this remark is hardly in place here, as the tapestries are of later date, and not solely needlework. To return, however: mention is made in an old chronicle of *antiquitas Congregatio Ancillarum, quæ opere plumario ornamenta ecclesiam laborabant*. It has been a subject of much discussion whether this *Opus Plumarium* signified some arrangement of real feathers, or merely fanciful embroidery in imitation of them. Lytlington, Abbot of Croyland, in Edward the Fourth's time, gave to his church nine copes of cloth of gold, exquisitely feathered.\* This was perhaps embroidered imitation. A vestment which Cnute the Great presented to this abbey was made of silk embroidered with eagles of gold. Richard Upton, elected abbot in 1417, gave silk embroidered with falcons for copes; and about the same time John Freston gave a rich robe of Venetian blue embroidered with golden eagles. These were positively imitations merely; yet they evince the prevailing taste for feathered work, and, as we have shown, feathers themselves were much used. It is recorded that Pope Paul the Third sent King Pepin a present of a mantle interwoven with peacocks' feathers.

And from whatever circumstance the reverence for peacocks' feathers originated,† it is not, even yet,

\* “ *Opere plumario exquisitissime præparatas.*”

† In the classical ages, they were in high repute. Juno's chariot is drawn by peacocks; and Olympian Jove himself invests his royal limbs with a mantle formed of their feathers

quite exploded. There are some lingering remnants of a superstitious regard for them which may have had their origin in these very times and circumstances. For how surely, where they are rigidly traced, are our country customs, our vulgar ceremonies, our apparently absurd and senseless usages, found to emanate from some principle or superstition of general and prevailing adoption. In some counties we cannot enter a farm-house where the mantel-piece in the parlour is not decorated with a diadem of peacock feathers, which are carefully dusted and preserved. And in houses of more assuming pretensions the same custom frequently prevails; and we knew a lady who carefully preserved some peacock feathers in a drawer long after her association with people in a higher station than that to which she originally belonged had made her ashamed to display them in her parlour. *This* could not be for *mere* ornament: there is some idea of *luck* attached to them, which seems not improbably to have arisen from circumstances connected originally with the "Vow of the Peacock." At any rate, the religious care with which peacocks' feathers are preserved by many who care not for them as ornaments, is not a whit more ridiculous than to see people gravely turn over the money in their pockets when they first hear the cuckoo, or joyfully fasten a dropped horse-shoe on their threshold, or shudderingly turn aside if two straws lie across in their path, or thankfully seize an old shoe accidentally met with, heedless of the probable state of the beggared foot that may unconsciously have left it there, or any other of the million unaccountable customs

which diversify and enliven country life, and which still prevail and flourish, notwithstanding the extensive travels and sweeping devastations of the modern "schoolmaster."

Do not our readers recollect Cowper's thanksgiving "on finding the heel of a shoe?"—

"Fortune! I thank thee, gentle goddess! thanks!  
Not that my muse, though bashful, shall deny  
She would have thanked thee rather, hadst thou cast  
A treasure in her way; for neither meed  
Of early breakfast, to dispel the fumes  
And bowel-raking pains of emptiness,  
Nor noontide feast, nor ev'ning's cool repast,  
Hopes she from this—presumptuous, though perhaps  
The cobbler, leather-carving artist, might.  
Nathless she thanks thee, and accepts thy boon,  
Whatever; not as erst the fabled cock,  
Vain-glorious fool! unknowing what he found,  
Spurned the rich gem thou gavest him. Wherefore, ah  
Why not on me that favour, (worthier sure!)  
Conferr'dst, goddess! thou art blind, thou sayest:  
Enough! thy blindness shall excuse the deed."

Return we to our needlework.

We have clear proof that, before the end of the seventh century, our fair countrywomen were skilled not merely in the use of the needle as applied to necessary purposes, but also in its application to the varied and elegant embroidered garments to which we have so frequently alluded, as forming properties of value and consideration. They were chiefly executed by ladies of the highest rank and greatest piety—very frequently, indeed, by those of royal blood—and were usually (as we have before observed) devoted to the embellishment of the church, or the decoration of its ministers. It was

not unusual to bequeath such properties. "I give," said the wife of the Conqueror, in her will, "to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, my tunic worked at Winchester by Alderet's wife, and the mantle embroidered with gold, which is in my chamber, to make a cope. Of my two golden girdles, I give that which is ornamented with emblems for the purpose of suspending the lamp before the great altar."\* Amongst some costly presents sent by Isabella, Queen of Edward the Second, to the Pope, was a magnificent cope, embroidered and studded with large white pearls, and purchased of the executors of Catherine Lincoln, for a sum equivalent to between two and three thousand pounds of present money. Another cope, thought worthy to accompany it, was also the work of an Englishwoman, Rose de Bureford, wife of John de Bureford, citizen and merchant of London.

Anciently, banners, either from being made of some relic, or from the representation on them of holy things, were held sacred, and much superstitious faith placed in them; consequently the pious and industrious finger was much occupied in working them. King Arthur, when he fought the eighth battle against the Saxons, carried the "image of Christ and of the blessed Mary (always a virgin) upon his shoulders." Over the tomb of Oswald, the great Christian hero, was laid a banner of purple wrought with gold. When St. Augustine first came to preach to the Saxons, he had a cross borne before him, with a banner, on which was the image of our

\* The name of Dame Leviet has descended to posterity as an embroiderer to the Conqueror and his Queen.

Saviour Christ. The celebrated standard of the Danes had the sacred raven worked on it; and the ill-fated Harold bore to the field of Hastings a banner with the figure of an armed man worked in gold thread: to the same field William bore a standard, a gift from the Pope, and blessed by his Holiness.

It is recorded of St. Dunstan, who, as our readers well know, excelled in many pursuits, and especially in painting, for which he frequently forsook his peculiar occupation of goldsmith, that on one occasion, at the earnest request of a lady, he *tinted* a sacerdotal vestment for her, which she afterwards embroidered in gold thread in an exquisitely beautiful style. Most of these embroidered works were first tinted, very probably in the way in which they now are, or until the freer influx of the more beautiful German patterns, they lately were; and it is from this previous tinting that they are so frequently described in the old books as *painted* garments, *pictured* vestments, &c., this term by no means seeming usually to imply that the use of the needle had been neglected or superseded in them. The garments of Edward the Confessor, which he wore upon occasions of great solemnity, were sumptuously embroidered with gold by the hands of Edgitha, his Queen. The four princesses, daughters of King Edward the Elder, were most carefully educated: their early years were chiefly devoted to literary pursuits, but they were nevertheless most assiduously instructed in the use of the needle, and are highly celebrated by historians for their assiduity and skill in spinning, weaving, and needlework.



This was so far, says the historian, from spoiling the fortunes of those royal spinsters, that it procured them the addresses of the greatest princes then in Europe, and one, "in whom the whole essence of beauty had centered, was demanded from her brother by Hugh, King of the Franks."

Our fair readers may take some interest in knowing what were the propitiatory offerings of a noble suitor of those days.

"Perfumes, such as never had been seen in England before; jewels, but more especially emeralds, the greenness of which, reflected by the sun, illumined the countenances of the bystanders with agreeable light; many fleet horses, with their trappings, and, as Virgil says, 'champing their golden bits;' an alabaster vase, so exquisitely chased, that the corn-fields really seemed to wave, the vines to bud, the figures of men actually to move, and so clear and polished, that it reflected the features like a mirror; the sword of Constantine the Great, on which the name of its original possessor was read in golden letters; on the pommel, upon thick plates of gold, might be seen fixed an iron spike, one of the four which the Jewish faction prepared for the crucifixion of our Lord; the spear of Charles the Great, which, whenever that invincible Emperor hurled in his expeditions against the Saracens, he always came off conqueror; it was reported to be the same which, driven into the side of our Saviour by the hand of the centurion, opened, by that precious wound, the joys of paradise to wretched mortals; the banner of the most blessed martyr Maurice, chief of the Theban legion, with which the



same King, in the Spanish war, used to break through the battalions of the enemy, however fierce and wedged together, and put them to flight; a diadem, precious from its quantity of gold, but more so for its jewels, the splendour of which threw the sparks of light so strongly on the beholders, that the more steadfastly any person endeavoured to gaze, so much the more dazzled he was—compelled to avert his eyes; part of the holy and adorable cross enclosed in crystal, where the eye, piercing through the substance of the stone, might discern the colour and size of the wood; a small portion of the crown of thorns enclosed in a similar manner, which, in derision of his government, the madness of the soldiers placed on Christ's sacred head.

“The King (Athelstan), delighted with such great and exquisite presents, made an equal return of good offices, and gratified the soul of the longing suitor by a union with his sister. With some of these presents he enriched succeeding kings; but to Malmesbury he gave part of the cross and crown; by the support of which, I believe, that place even now flourishes, though it has suffered so many shipwrecks of its liberty, so many attacks of its enemies.”\*

It is not to be supposed that at a time when the “whole island” was said to “blaze” with devotion, and when, moreover, her own fair daughters surpassed the whole world in needlework, that the English churches were deficient in its beautiful adornments. Far otherwise, indeed. We forbear to enumerate many, because our chapter has already

\* Will. of Malmesbury, 156.

exceeded its prescribed limits; but we may particularize a golden veil or hanging (vellum), embroidered with the destruction of Troy, which Witlaf, King of Mercia, gave to the abbey of Croyland; and the coronation mantle of Harold Harefoot, son of Cnute, which he gave to the same abbey, made of silk, and embroidered with "Hesperian apples." Richard, who was abbot of St. Alban's from 1088 to 1119, made a present to his monastery of a suit of hangings which contained the whole history of the primitive martyr of England, Alban.

Croyland Abbey possessed many hangings for the altars, embroidered with golden birds; and a garment, which seems to have been a peculiar, and considered a valuable one, being a black gown wrought with gold letters, to officiate in at funerals. The enigmatical letters which were worked on ecclesiastical vestments in those days, were various and peculiar, and have given abundant scope for antiquarian research. We have heard it surmised that they took their rise in times of persecution, being indications (then, doubtless, slight and unostentatious ones) by which the Christians might know each other. But they came into more general use, not merely as symbolical characters, but individual names were wrought, and that not on personal garments alone, for Pope Leo the Fourth placed a cloth on the altar woven with gold, and spangled all over with pearls. It had on each side (right and left) a circle bounded with gold, within which the name of his Holiness was written in precious stones. In many old paintings a letter or letters have been noticed on the garment of the principal figure, and they have been taken for private marks of the

painter, but it is more probable, says Ciampini,\* that they are either copied from old garments, or are intended to denote the dignity of the character to which they are attached.

We will conclude the present chapter by remarking that one of the most magnificent specimens of ancient needlework in existence, and which is in excellent preservation, is the State Pall belonging to the Fishmongers Company. The end pieces are similar, and consist of a picture, wrought in gold and silk, of the patron, St. Peter, in pontifical robes, seated on a superb throne, and crowned with the papal tiara. Holding in one hand the keys, the other is in the posture of giving the benediction, and on each side is an angel, bearing a golden vase, from which he scatters incense over the Saint. The angel's wings, according to old custom, are composed of peacocks' feathers in all their natural vivid colours; their outer robes are gold raised with crimson; their under vests white, shaded with sky blue; the faces are finely worked in satin, after nature, and they have long yellow hair.

There are various designs on the side pieces; the most important and conspicuous is Christ delivering the keys to Peter. Among other decorations are, of course, the arms of the company, richly emblazoned, the supporters of which, the merman and mermaid, are beautifully worked, the merman in gold armour, the mermaid in white silk, with long tresses in golden thread.

This magnificent piece of needlework has probably no parallel in this country.

\* Vet. Mon. cap. 13.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY. PART I.

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“ Needlework sublime.”—COWPER.

GREAT discussion has taken place amongst the learned with regard to the exact time at which the Bayeux tapestry was wrought. The question, except as a matter of curiosity, is, perhaps, of little account—fifty years earlier or later, nearly eight hundred years ago. It had always been considered as the work of Matilda, the wife of the conquering Duke of Normandy until a few years ago, when the Abbé de la Rue started and endeavoured to maintain the hypothesis that it was worked by or under the direction of the Empress Matilda, the daughter of Henry the First.\* But his positions, as Dibdin observes,† are all of a *negative* character, and, “ according to the strict rules of logic, it must not be admitted, that because such and such writers have *not* noticed a circumstance, therefore that circum-

\* Archæologia, vol. xvii.

† Biblio. Tour, vol. i., 138.

stance or event cannot have taken place." Hudson Gurney, Charles A. Stothard, and Thos. Amyott, Esqrs. have all published essays on the subject,\* which establish almost to certainty the fact of the production of this tapestry at the earlier of the two periods contended for, viz. from 1066 to 1068.

In this we rejoice, because this Herculean labour has a halo of deep interest thrown round it, from the circumstance of its being the proud tribute of a fond and affectionate wife, glorying in her husband's glory, and proud of emblazoning his deeds. As the work of the Empress Matilda it would still be a magnificent production of industry and of skill; as the work of "Duke William's" wife these qualities merge in others of a more interesting character.†

This excellent and amiable princess was a most highly accomplished woman, and remarkable for her learning; she was the affectionate mother of a large family, the faithful wife of an enterprising monarch, with whom she lived for thirty-three years so harmoniously that her death had such an effect on her husband as to cause him to relinquish, never again to resume, his usual amusements.‡

\* Archæol. vols. xviii., xix.

† One writer, Bolton Corney, Esq., maintains that this work was provided at the expense of the Chapter of Bayeux, under their superintendence, and from their designs. "If it had not (says he) been devised within the precincts of a church it could not have escaped female influence: it could not have contained such indications of *celibatic* superintendence. It is not without its domestic and festive scenes; and comprises, exclusive of the borders, about 530 figures; but in this number there are only three females."

‡ Henry III., 25.



Little did the affectionate wife think, whilst employed over this task, that her domestic tribute of regard should become an historical memento of her country, and blazon forth her illustrious husband's deeds, and her own unwearying affection, to ages upon ages hereafter to be born. For independently of the interest which may be attached to this tapestry as a pledge of feminine affection, a token of housewifely industry, and a specimen of ancient stitchery, it derives more historic value as the work of the Conqueror's wife, than if it were the production of a later time. For it holds good with these historical tapestries as with the written histories and romances of the middle ages;—authors wrote and ladies wrought (we mean no pun) their characters, *not* in the costume of the times in which the action or event celebrated took place, but in that in which they were at the time engaged; and thus, had Matilda the Empress worked this tapestry, it is more than probable that she would have introduced the armorial bearings which were in her time becoming common, and especially the Norman leopards, of which in the tapestry there is not the slightest trace. In her time too the hair was worn so long as to excite the censures of the church, whilst at the time of the Conquest the Normans almost shaved their heads; and this circumstance, more than the want of beards, is supposed by Mr. Stothard\* to have led to the surmise of the Anglo-Saxon spies that the Normans were all priests. This circumstance is faithfully depicted in the tapestry, where also the chief weapon seen is a lance, which was little used after the Conquest. These peculia-

\* Archæol. vol. xix.



rities, with several others which have been commented on by antiquarian writers, seem to establish the date of this production as coeval with the action which it represents, and therefore invaluable as an historical document.

“It is, perhaps,” says one of the learned writers on the Bayeux tapestry, “a characteristic of the literature of the present age to deduce history from sources of second-rate authority; from ballads and pictures rather than from graver and severer records. Unquestionably this is the preferable course, if amusement, not truth, be the object sought for. Nothing can be more delightful than to read the reigns of the Plantagenets in the dramas of Shakspeare, or the tales of later times in the ingenious fictions of the author of Waverley. But those who would draw historical facts from their hiding-places must be content to plod through many a ponderous worm-eaten folio, and many a half-legible and still less intelligible manuscript.

✓ “Yet,” continues he, “if the Bayeux tapestry be not history of the first class, it is, perhaps, something better. It exhibits genuine traits, elsewhere sought in vain, of the costume and manners of that age which, of all others, if we except the period of the Reformation, ought to be the most interesting to us; that age which gave us a new race of monarchs, bringing with them new landholders, new laws, and almost a new language.

“As in the magic pages of Froissart, we here behold our ancestors of each race in most of the occupations of life, in courts and camps, in pastime and in battle, at feasts and on the bed of sickness. These

are characteristics which of themselves would call forth a lively interest; but their value is greatly enhanced by their connection with one of the most important events in history, the main subject of the whole design."

This magnificent piece of work is 227 feet in length by 20 inches in width, is now usually kept at the Town-hall in Rouen, and is treasured as the most precious relic. It was formerly the theme of some long and learned dissertations of antiquarian historians, amongst whom Montfaucon, perhaps, ranks most conspicuous.

Still so little *local* interest does it excite, that Mr. Gurney, in 1814, was nearly leaving Bayeux without seeing it because he did not happen to ask for it by the title of "*Toile de St. Jean*," and so his request was not understood; and Ducarel, in his "*Tour*," says, "The priests of this cathedral to whom we addressed ourselves for a sight of this remarkable piece of antiquity, knew nothing of it; the circumstance only of its being annually hung up in their church led them to understand what we wanted; no person there knowing that the object of our inquiry any ways related to William the Conqueror, whom to this day they call Duke William.

During the French Revolution its surrender was demanded for the purpose of covering the guns; fortunately, however, a priest succeeded in concealing it until that storm was overpast.

Bonaparte better knew its value. It was displayed for some time in Paris, and afterwards at some seaport towns. M. Denon had the charge of it committed to him by Bonaparte, but it was afterwards

restored to Bayeux. It was at the time of the usurper's threatened invasion of our country that so much value was attached to, and so much pains taken to exhibit this roll. "Whether," says Dibdin, "at such a sight the soldiers shouted, and, drawing their glittering swords,

Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,—

confident of a second representation of the same subject by a second subjugation of our country—is a point which has not been exactly detailed to me! But the supposition may not be considered very violent when I inform you that I was told by a casual French visitor of the tapestry, that '*pour cela, si Bonaparte avait eu le courage, le résultat auroit été comme autrefois.*' Matters, however, have taken rather a different turn."

The tapestry is coiled round a machine like that which lets down the buckets to a well, and a female unrols and explains it. It is worked in different coloured worsteds on white cloth, to which time has given the tinge of brown holland; the parts intended to represent flesh are left untouched by the needle. The colours are somewhat faded, and not very multitudinous. Perhaps it is the little variety of colours which Matilda and her ladies had at their disposal which has caused them to depict the horses of any colour—"blue, green, red, or yellow." The outline, too, is of course stiff and rude.\* At the top and bottom of the main work is a narrow alle-

\* The attempts to imitate the human figure were, at this period, stiff and rude: but arabesque patterns were now chiefly worked; and they were rich and varied.

gorical border ; and each division or different action or event is marked by a branch or tree extending the whole depth of the tapestry ; and most frequently each tableau is so arranged that the figures at the end of one and the beginning of the next are turned from each other, whilst above each the subject of the scene and the names of the principal actors are wrought in large letters. The subjects of the border vary ; some of Æsop's fables are depicted on it, sometimes instruments of agriculture, sometimes fanciful and grotesque figures and borders ; and during the heat of the battle of Hastings, when, as Montfaucon says, "*le carnage est grand,*" the appropriate device of the border is *a layer of dead men.*

"From the fury of the Normans, good Lord deliver us," was, we are told, in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries a petition in the Litanies of all nations.\* For long did England sorrow under their "fury," though *in time* the Conquest produced advantageous results to the kingdom at large. Whether this Norman subjugation was in accordance with the will of the monarch Edward, or whether it was entirely the result of Duke William's ambition, must now ever remain in doubt. Harold asserted that Edward the Confessor appointed him his successor (of which, however, he could not produce proof) ; to this must be opposed the improbability of Edward thus ennobling a family of whom he felt, and with such abundant cause, so jealous.

Probably the old chronicler (Fabyan) has hit the mark when he says, "This Edgarre (the rightful

\* Henry III., 554.

heir) was yonge, and specyally for Harolde was stronge of knyghtes and rychesse, he wanne the reygne." Be this as it may, however, Harold on the very day of Edward's interment, and that was only the day subsequent to his death, was crowned king in St. Paul's; apparently with the concurrence of all concerned, for he was powerful and popular. And his government during the chief part of his short kingly career was such as to increase his popularity: he was wise, and just, and gracious. "Anone as he was crowned, he began to fordoo euyll lawes and customes before vsed, and stablysshed the good lawes, and specyally whiche (suche) as were for the defence of holy church, and punysshed the euyll doers, to the fere and example of other."\*

But uncontrolled authority early began to produce its wonted results. He "waxyd so prowde, and for couetouse wold not deuyde the prayes that he took to hys knyghtys, that had well deseruyd it, but kepte it to hymself, that he therby lost the fauour of many of his knyghtys and people."† This defection from his party doubtless made itself felt in the mortal struggle with the Norman duke which issued in Harold's discomfiture and death.

Proceed we to the tapestry.

The first scene which the needlewoman has depicted is a conference between a person who, from his white flowing beard and regal costume, is easily recognized as the "sainted Edward," and another, who, from his subsequent embarkation, is supposed to be Harold. The subject of the conference is, of course, only conjectured. Harold's visit to Normandy

\* Fabyan's Chron.

† Rastell's Chron.



is well known; but whether, as some suppose, he was driven thither by a tempest when on a cruise of pleasure; whether he went as ambassador from Edward to communicate the intentions of the Confessor in William's behoof; or whether, as the tapestry is supposed more strongly to indicate, he obtained Edward's reluctant consent to his visit to reclaim his brother who, a hostage for his own good conduct, had been sent to William by Edward; these are points which now defy investigation, even if they were of sufficient importance to claim it. Harold is then seen on his journey attended by cavaliers on horseback, surrounded by dogs, and, an emblem of his own high dignity, a hawk on his fist.

One great value of this tapestry is the scrupulous regard paid to points and circumstances which at first view might appear insignificant, but which, as correlative confirmations of usages and facts, are of considerable importance. Thus, it is known to antiquarians that great personages formerly had two only modes of equipment when proceeding on a journey, that of war or the chase. Harold is here fully equipped for the chase, and consequently the first glimpse obtained of his person would show that his errand was one of peace. The hawk on the fist was a mark of high nobility; no inferior person is represented with one: Harold and Guy Earl of Ponthieu alone bear them.

In former times this bird was esteemed so sacred that it was prohibited in the ancient laws for any one to give his hawk even as a part of his ransom. In the reign of Edward the Third it was made felony to steal a hawk; and to take its eggs, even in a



person's own ground, was punishable with imprisonment for a year and a day, besides a fine at the king's pleasure. Nay, more than this, by the laws of one part of the island, and probably of the whole,\* the price of a hawk, or of a greyhound, was once the very same with the price of a man; and there was a time when the robbing of a hawk's nest was as great a crime in the eye of the law, and as severely punished, as the murder of a Christian. And of this high value they were long considered. "It is difficult," says Mr. Mills,† "to fancy the extravagant degree of estimation in which hawks were held during the chivalric ages. As symbols of high estate they were constantly carried about by the nobility of both sexes. There was even a usage of bringing them into places appropriated to public worship; a practice which, in the case of some individuals, appears to have been recognised as a right. The treasurer of the church of Auxerre enjoyed the distinction of assisting at divine service on solemn days with a falcon on his fist; and the Lord of Sassai held the privilege of perching his upon the altar. Nothing was thought more dishonourable to a man of rank than to give up his hawks; and if he were taken prisoner he would not resign them even for liberty."

The different positions in which the hawk is placed in our needlework are worthy of remark. Here its head is raised, its wings fluttering, as if eager and ready for flight; afterwards, when Harold follows the Earl of Ponthieu as his captive,

\* Henry II., 515.

Hist. Chiv.

not, of course, deprived of his bird, but by a beautiful fiction the bird is represented depressed, and with its head turned towards its master's breast as if trying to nestle and shelter itself there. Could sympathy be more poetically expressed? Afterwards, on Harold's release, the bird is again depicted as fluttering to "soar clate."

The practice very prevalent in these "barbarous times," as we somewhat too sweepingly term them, of entering on no expedition of war or pastime without imploring the protection of heaven, is intimated by a church which Harold is entering previously to his embarkation. That this observance might degenerate in many instances into mere form may be very true; and the "hunting masses" celebrated in song might, some of them, be more honoured in the breach than the observance: nevertheless in clearing away the dross of old times, we have, it is to be feared, removed some of the gold also; and the abolition of the custom of having the churches open at *all times*, so that at any moment the heart-prompted prayer might be offered up under the holy shelter of a consecrated roof, has tended very much, it is to be feared, to abolish the habit of frequent prayer. A habit in itself, and regarded even merely as a habit, fraught with inestimable good.

We next see Harold and his companions refreshing themselves prior to their departure, pledging each other, and doubtless drinking to the success of their enterprise whatever it might be. The horns from which they are drinking have been the subject of critical remark. We find that horns were used

for various purposes, and were of four sorts, drinking horns, hunting horns, horns for summoning the people, and of a mixed kind.

They were used as modes of investiture, and this manner of endowing was usual amongst the Danes in England. King Cnute himself gave lands at Pusey in Berkshire to the family of that name, with a horn solemnly at that time delivered, as a confirmation of the grant. Edward the Confessor made a like donation to the family of Nigel. The celebrated horn of Alphas, kept in the sacristy in York Minster, was probably a drinking cup belonging to this prince, and was by him given together with all his lands and revenues to that church. "When he gave the horn that was to convey it (his estate) he filled it with wine, and on his knees before the altar, 'Deo et S. Petro omnes terras et redditus propinavit.' So that he drank it off, in testimony that thereby he gave them his lands."\* Many instances might be adduced to show that this mode of investiture was common in England in the time of the Danes, the Anglo-Saxons, and at the close of the reign of the Norman conqueror.

The drinking horns had frequently a screw at the end, which being taken off at once converted them into hunting horns, which circumstance will account for persons of distinction frequently carrying their own. Such doubtless were those used of old by the Breton hunters about Brechelian, which is poetically described as a forest long and broad, much famed throughout Brittany. The fountain of Berenton

\* Archæol. 1 and 3.

risers from beneath a stone there. Thither the hunters are used to repair in sultry weather, and drawing up water with their horns (those horns which had just been used to sound the animated warnings of the chase), they sprinkle the stone for the purpose of having rain, which is then wont to fall throughout the whole forest around. There too fairies are to be seen, and many wonders happen. The ground is broken and precipitous, and deer in plenty roam there, but the husbandmen have forsaken it. Our author \* goes on to say that he personally visited this enchanted region, but that, though he saw the forest and the land, no marvels presented themselves. The reason is obvious. He had, before the time, contracted some of the scepticism of these matter-of-fact "schoolmaster abroad" days. He wanted faith, and therefore he did not *deserve* to see them.

The use of drinking horns is very ancient. They were usually embellished or garnished with silver; they were in very common use among our Saxon ancestors, who frequently had them gilded and magnificently ornamented. One of those in use amongst Harold's party seems to be very richly decorated.

The revellers are, however, obliged to dispatch, as their leader, Harold, is already wading through the water to his vessel. The character of Harold as displayed throughout this tapestry is a magnificent one, and does infinite credit to the generous and noble disposition of Matilda the queen, who dis-

\* Master Wace. Roman de Rou, &c., by Taylor.

dained to depreciate the character of a fallen foe. He commences his expedition by an act of piety; here, on his embarkation at Bosham, he is kindly carrying his dog through the water. In crossing the sands of the river Cosno, which are dangerous, so very dangerous as most frequently to cause the destruction of those who attempt their transit, his whole concern seems to be to assist the passage of others, whose inferior natural powers do not enable them to compete with danger so successfully as himself; his character for undaunted bravery is such, that William condescends to supplicate his assistance in a feud then at issue between himself and another nobleman, and so nobly does he bear himself that the proud Norman with his own hands invests him with the emblems of honour (as seen in the tapestry); and, last scene of all, he disdained all submission, he repelled all the entreaties with which his brothers assailed him not personally to lead his troops to the encounter, and the corpses of 15,000 Normans on this field, and of even a greater number on the English monarch's side, told in bloody characters that Harold had not quailed in the last great encounter.

Unpropitious winds drive him and his attendants from their intended course. Many historians accuse the people of Ponthieu of making prisoners all whose ill fortune threw them upon their coast, and of treating them with great barbarity, in order to extort the larger ransom. Be this as it may, Harold has scarcely set his foot on shore ere he is forcibly captured by the vassals of Guy of Ponthieu, who is there on horseback to witness the proceeding. The



tapestry goes on to picture the progress of the captured troop and their captors to Belrem or Beurain, and a conference when there between the earl and his prisoner, where the fair embroideresses have given a delicate and expressive feature by depicting the conquering noble with his sword elevated, and the princely captive, wearing indeed his sword, but with the point depressed.

It is said that a fisherman of Ponthieu, who had been often in England and knew Harold's person, was the cause of his capture. "He went privily to Guy, the Count of Pontif, and would speak to no other; and he told the Count how he could put a great prize in his way, if he would go with him; and that if he would give him only twenty livres he should gain a hundred by it, for he would deliver him such a prisoner as would pay a hundred livres or more for his ransome." The Count agreed to his terms, and then the fisherman showed him Harold.

Hearing of Harold's captivity, William the Norman is anxious on all and every account to obtain possession of his person. He consequently sends ambassadors to Guy, who is represented on the tapestry as giving them audience. The person holding the horses is somewhat remarkable; he is a bearded dwarf. Dwarfs were formerly much sought after in the houses of great folks, and they were frequently sent as presents from one potentate to another. They were petted and indulged somewhat in the way of the more modern fool or jester. The custom is very old. The Romans were so fond of them, that they often used artificial methods to pre-



vent the growth of children designed for dwarfs, by enclosing them in boxes, or by the use of tight bandages. The sister of one of the Roman emperors had a dwarf who was only two feet and a hand breadth in height. Many relations concerning dwarfs we may look upon as not less fabulous than those of giants. They are, like the latter, indispensable in romances, where their feats, far from being dwarfish, are absolutely gigantic, though these diminutive heroes seldom occupy any more ostensible post than that of humble attendant.

“ Fill’d with these views th’ *attendant dwarf* she sends :  
 Before the knight the dwarf respectful bends;  
 Kind greetings bears as to his lady’s guest,  
 And prays his presence to adorn her feast.  
 The knight delays not.”

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“ A hugye giaunt stiffe and starke,  
 All fculle of limbe and lere ;  
 Two goggling eyen like fire farden,  
 A mouthe from eare to eare.  
 Before him came a dwarffe full lowe,  
 That *waited on his knee*.”—SIR CAULINE.

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Behind her farre away a dwarfe did lag  
 That lasie seem’d, in being ever last,  
 Or wearied with *bearing of her bag*  
 Of needments at his backe.—FAERIE QUEENE.

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The dwarf worked in the tapestry has the name TVROLD placed above him, and seems to have been a dependant of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, William the Conqueror’s brother.\*

\* Archæologia, lvo. xix.

The first negotiations are unsuccessful; more urgent messages are forwarded, and in the end Duke William himself proceeds at the head of some troops to *compel* the surrender of the prisoner. Count Guy is intimidated, and the object is attained; every stage of these proceedings is depicted on the canvas, as well as William's courteous reception of Harold at his palace.

The portraiture of a female in a sort of porch, with a clergyman in the act of pronouncing a benediction on her, is supposed to have reference to the engagement between William and his guest, that the latter should marry the daughter of the former. Many other circumstances and conditions were tacked to this agreement, one of which was that Harold should guard the English throne for William; agreements which one and all—under the reasonable plea that they were enforced ones—the Anglo-Saxon nobleman broke through. It is said that his desertion so affected the mind of the pious young princess,\* that her heart broke on her passage to Spain, whither they were conveying her to a forced union with a Spanish prince. As this young lady was a mere child at the time of Harold's visit to Normandy, the story, though exceedingly pretty, is probably very apocryphal. Ducarel gives an entirely different explanation of the scene, and says that it is probably meant to represent a secretary or officer coming to William's duchess, to acquaint her with the agreement just made relative to her daughter.

\* " Her knees were like horn with constant kneeling."

The Earl of Bretagne is at this moment at war with Duke William, and the latter attaching Harold to his party, from whom indeed he receives effectual service, arrives at Mount St. Michel, passes the river Cosno (to which we have before alluded), and arrives at Dol in Brittany. Parties are seen flying towards Rennes. William and his followers attack Dinant, of which the keys are delivered up, and the Normans come peaceably to Bayeux; William having previously, with his own hands, invested Harold with a suit of armour.

Harold shortly returns to England, but not before a very important circumstance had taken place. William and Harold had mutually entered into an agreement by which the latter had pledged himself to be true to William, to acknowledge him as Edward's successor on the English throne, and to do all in his power to obtain for him the peaceable possession of that throne; and as Harold was, the reigning monarch excepted, the first man in England, this promised support was of no trifling moment. William resolved therefore to have the oath repeated with all possible solemnity. His brother Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux, assisted him in this matter. Accordingly we see Harold standing between two altars covered with cloth of gold, a hand on each, uttering the solemn adjuration, of which William, seated on his throne, is a delighted auditor; for he well knew that the oath was more fearful than Harold was at all aware of. For "William sent for all the holy bodies thither, and put so many of them together as to fill a whole chest, and then covered them with a pall; but Harold neither

saw them, nor knew of their being there, for nought was shown or told to him about it; and over all was a phylactery, the best that he could select. When Harold placed his hand upon it, the hand trembled and the flesh quivered; but he swore, and promised upon his oath, to take Ele to wife, and to deliver up England to the duke; and thereunto to do all in his power, according to his might and wit, after the death of Edward, if he should live, so help him God and the holy relics there! (meaning the Gospels, for he had none idea of any other). Many cried ‘God grant it!’ and when Harold had kissed the saints, and had risen upon his feet, the duke led him up to the chest, and made him stand near it; and took off the chest the pall that had covered it, and showed Harold upon what holy relics he had sworn, and he was sorely alarmed at the sight.”

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## CHAPTER IX.

## THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.—PART II.

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“ But bloody bloody was the field,  
Ere that lang day was done.”—HARDYKNUTE.

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“ King William bithought him alsoe of that  
- Folke that was forlorne,  
And slayn also thoruz him  
In the bataile biforn.  
And ther as the bataile was,  
An abbey he lite rere  
Of Seint Martin, for the soules  
That there slayn were.  
And the monkes well ynoug  
Feffed without fayle,  
That is called in Englonde  
Abbey of Bataile.”

IMMEDIATELY after the solemn ceremony described in the foregoing chapter, Harold is depicted as returning to England and presenting himself before the king, Edward the Confessor. “ But the day came that no man can escape, and King Edward drew near to die.” His deathbed and his funeral procession are both wrought in the tapestry, but by some accident have been transposed. His remains



are borne in splendid procession to the magnificent house which he had builded (*i.e.* rebuilt), Westminster Abbey; over which, in the sky, a hand is seen to point as if in benediction. It is well known that the Abbey was barely finished at the time of the pious monarch's death, and this circumstance is intimated in an intelligible though homely manner in the tapestry by a person occupied in placing a weathercock on the summit of the building.

The first pageant seen within its walls was the funeral array of the monarch who so beautifully rebuilt and so amply endowed it. Before the high altar, in a splendid shrine, where gems and jewelry flashed back the gleams of innumerable torches, and amid the solemn chant of the monks, whose "Miserere" echoed through the vaulted aisles, interrupted but by the subdued wail of the mourners, or the emphatic benediction of the poor whose friend he had been, were laid the remains of him who was called the Sainted Edward; whose tomb was considered so hallowed a spot that the very stones around it were worn down by the knees of the pilgrims who resorted thither for prayer; and the very dust of whose shrine was carefully swept and collected, exported to the continent, and bought by devotees at a high price.

We next see in the tapestry the crown *offered* to Harold (a circumstance to be peculiarly remarked, since thus depicted by his opponent's wife), and then Harold shows right royally receiving the homage and gratulations of those around.

But the next scene forbodes a change of fortune: "ISTI MIRANT STELLA," is the explanation wrought



over it. For there appeared “a blasing starre, which was seene not onelie here in England, but also in other parts of the world, and continued the space of seven daies. This blasing starre might be a prediction of mischeefe imminent and hanging over Harold’s head; for they never appeare but as prognosticats of afterclaps.”

Popular belief has generally invested these ill-omened bodies with peculiar terrors. “These blasing starres—dreadful to be seene, with bloudie haire, and all over rough and shagged at the top.” They vary, however, in their appearance. Sometimes they are pale, and glitter like a sword, without any rays or beams. Such was the one which is said to have hung over Jerusalem for near a year before its destruction, filling the minds of all who beheld it with awe and superstitious dread. A comet resembling a horn appeared when the “whole manhood of Greece fought the battaile of Salamis.” Comets foretold the war between Cæsar and Pompey, the murder of Claudius, and the tyranny of Nero. Though *usually*, they were not *invariably*, considered as portents of evil omen: for the birth and accession of Alexander, of Mithridates, the birth of Charles Martel, and the accession of Charlemagne, and the commencement of the Tâtár empire, were all notified by blazing stars. A very brilliant one which appeared for seven consecutive nights soon after the death of Julius Cæsar was supposed to be conveying the soul of the murdered dictator to Olympus. An author who wrote on one which appeared in the reign of Elizabeth was most anxious, as in duty bound, to apply the phenomenon

to the queen. But here was the puzzle. "To have foretold calamities might have been misprision of treason; and the only precedent for saying anything good of a comet was to be drawn from that which occurred after the death of Julius Cæsar;" but it so happened that at this time Elizabeth was by no means either ripe or willing for her apotheosis.\*

Comets, one author writes, "were made to the end the etherial regions might not be more void of monsters than the ocean is of whales and other great thieving fishes, and that a gross fatness being gathered together as excrements into an imposthume, the celestial air might thereby be purged, lest the sun should be obscured." Another says, they "signifie corruption of the ayre. They are signes of earthquake, of warres, chaunging of kyngdomes, great dearth of corne, yea, a common death of man and beast." So a poet of the same age:—

" There with long bloody hair a blazing star  
Threatens the world with famine, plague, and war;  
To princes death, to kingdoms many crosses,  
To all estates inevitable losses;  
To herdsmen rot, to plowmen hapless seasons,  
To sailors storms, to cities civil treasons."

But a writer on comets in 1665 crowned all previous conjecture. "As if God and Nature in-

\* The Comet of 1618 carried dismay and horror in its course. Not only mighty monarchs, but the humblest private individuals seem to have considered the sign as sent to them, and to have set a double guard on all their actions. Thus Sir Symonds D'Ewes, the learned antiquary, having been in danger of an untimely end by entangling himself among some bell-ropes, makes a memorandum in his private diary never more to exercise himself in bell-ringing when there is a comet in the sky.—Aikin.

tended by comets to ring the knells of princes; esteeming the bells of churches upon earth not sacred enough for such illustrious and eminent performances."

No wonder that the comet in Harold's days was regarded with fearful misgivings.

It did not, however, dismay him. Duke William, as may be supposed, did not tamely submit to a usurpation of what he considered, or affected to consider, his own dominions—a circumstance which we see an envoy, probably from his party in England, makes him acquainted with. He holds a council, seemingly an earnest and animated one, which evidently results in the immediate preparation of a fleet; of which the tapestry delineates the various stages and circumstances, from the felling of the timber in its native woods to the launching of the vessels, stored and fully equipped in arms, provisions, and heroes for invasion and conquest.

William in this expedition received unusual assistance from his own tributary chiefs, and from various other allies, who joined his standard, and without whom, indeed, he could not, with any chance of success, have made his daring attempt. A summer and autumn were spent in fitting-up the fleet and collecting the forces, "and there was no knight in the land, no good serjeant, archer, nor peasant of stout heart, and of age for battle, that the duke did not summon to go with him to England; promising rents to the vavassors, and honours to the barons." Thus was an armament prepared of seven hundred ships, but the one which

bore William, the hero of the expedition, shone proudly pre-eminent over the rest. It was the gift of his affectionate queen. It is represented in the canvas of larger size than the others: the mast, surmounted by a cross, bears the banner which was sent to William by the Pope as a testimony of his blessing and approbation. On this mast also a beacon-light nightly blazed as a *point d'approche* of the remainder of the fleet. On the poop was the figure of a boy (supposed to be meant for the conqueror's youngest son), gilded, and looking earnestly towards England, holding in one hand a banner, in the other an ivory horn, on which he is sounding a joyful reveillee.

But long the fleet waited at St. Valeri for a fair wind, until the barons became weary and dispirited. Then they prayed the convent to bring out the shrine of St. Valeri and set it on a carpet in the plain; and all came praying the holy relics that they might be allowed to pass over sea. They offered so much money, that the relics were buried beneath it; and from that day forth they had good weather and a fair wind. "Than Willyam thanked God and Saynt Valary, and toke shortly after shyp-pynge, and helde his course towarde Englande."

On the arrival of the fleet in England a banquet is prepared. The shape of the table at which William sits has been the theme of some curious remarks by Father Montfaucon, which have been copied by Ducarel and others. It is in form of a half-moon, and was called by the Romans *sigma*, from the Greek σ. It was calculated only for seven

persons ; and a facetious emperor once invited eight, on purpose to raise a laugh against the person for whom there would be no place.

“ A knight in that country (Britain) heard the noise and cry made by the peasants and villains when they saw the great fleet arrive. He well knew that the Normans were come, and that their object was to seize the land. He posted himself behind a hill, so that they should not see him, and tarried there watching the arrival of the great fleet. He saw the archers come forward from the ships, and the knights follow. He saw the carpenters with their axes, and the host of people and troops. He saw the men throw the materials for the fort out of the ships. He saw them build up and enclose the fort, and dig the fosse around it. He saw them land the shields and armour. And as he beheld all this his spirit was troubled ; and he girt his sword and took his lance, saying he would go straightway to King Harold and tell the news. Forthwith he set out on his way, resting late and rising early ; and thus he journeyed on by night and by day to seek Harold his lord.” And we see him in the tapestry speeding to his beloved master.

Meanwhile Harold is not idle. But the fleet which, in expectation of his adversary's earlier arrival, he had stationed on the southern coast, had lately dispersed from want of provisions, and the King, occupied by the Norwegian invasion, had not been able to reinstate it ; and “ William came against him (says the Saxon chronicle) unawares ere his army was collected.” Thus the enemy found



nor opposition nor hinderance in obtaining a footing in the island.

Taken at such disadvantage, Harold did all that a brave man could do to repel his formidable adversary. The tapestry depicts, as well as may be expected, the battle.

“The priests had watched all night, and besought and called upon God, and prayed to him in their chapels, which were fitted up throughout the host. They offered and vowed fasts, penances, and orisons; they said psalms and misereres, litanies and kyriels; they cried on God, and for his mercy, and said paternosters and masses; some the SPIRITUS DOMINI, others SALUS POPULI, and many SALVE SANCTE PARENS, being suited to the season, as belonging to that day, which was Saturday.

“AND NOW, BEHOLD! THAT BATTLE WAS GATHERED WHEREOF THE FAME IS YET MIGHTY.

“Then Taillefer, who sang right well, rode, mounted on a swift horse, before the duke.

“Loud and far resounded the bray of the horns, and the shocks of the lances, the mighty strokes of clubs, and the quick clashing of swords. One while the Englishmen rushed on, another while they fell back; one while the men from over sea charged onwards, and again at other times retreated. When the English fall, the Normans shout. Each side taunts and defies the other, yet neither knoweth what the other saith; and the Normans say the English bark, because they understand not their speech.

“Some wax strong, others weak; the brave exult,

but the cowards tremble, as men who are sore dismayed. The Normans press on the assault, and the English defend their post well; they pierce the hauberks and cleave the shields; receive and return mighty blows. Again some press forwards, others yield, and thus in various ways the struggle proceeds."

The death of Harold's two brothers is depicted, and, finally, his own. It is said that his mother offered the weight of the body in gold to have the melancholy satisfaction of interring it, and that the Conqueror refused the boon. But other writers affirm, and apparently with truth, that William immediately transmitted the body, unransomed, to the bereaved parent, who had it interred in the monastery of Waltham.

With the death of Harold the tapestry now ends, though some writers think it probable that it once extended as far as the coronation of William. There can be little doubt of its having been intended to extend so far, though it is impossible now to ascertain whether the Queen was ever enabled quite to complete her Herculean task. Enough there is, however, to stamp it as one of the "most noble and interesting relics of antiquity;" and, as Dibdin calls it, "an exceedingly curious document of the conjugal attachment, and even enthusiastic veneration of Matilda, and a political record of more weight than may at first sight appear to belong to it." Taking it altogether, he adds, "none but itself could be its parallel."

Almost all historians describe the Normans as advancing to the onset "singing the song of Ro-

land," that is, a detail of the achievements of the slaughtered hero of Roncesvalles, which is well known to have been, for ages after the event to which it refers, a note of magical inspiration to deeds of "derring do." On this occasion it is recorded that the spirit note was sung by the minstrel Taillefer, who was, however, little contented to lead his countrymen by voice alone. It is not possible that our readers can be otherwise than pleased with the following animated account of his deeds :\*

THE ONSET OF TAILLEFER.

" Foremost in the bands of France,  
 Arm'd with hauberk and with lance,  
 And helmet glittering in the air,  
 As if a warrior-knight he were,  
 Rushed forth the minstrel Taillefer—  
 Borne on his courser swift and strong,  
 He gaily bounded o'er the plain,  
 And raised the heart-inspiring song  
 (Loud echoed by the warlike throng)  
 Of Roland and of Charlemagne,  
 Of Oliver, brave peer of old,  
 Untaught to fly, unknown to yield,  
 And many a knight and vassal bold,  
 Whose hallowed blood, in crimson flood,  
 Dyed Roncesvalles' field.

" Harold's host he soon descried,  
 Clustering on the hill's steep side:  
 Then turned him back brave Taillefer,  
 And thus to William urged his prayer :  
 ' Great Sire, it fits me not to tell  
 ' How long I've served you, or how well ;  
 ' Yet if reward my lays may claim,  
 Grant now the boon I dare to name ;  
 ' Minstrel no more, be mine the blow  
 ' That first shall strike yon perjured foe.'

\* By Thomas Amyot, Esq., F.S.A.—Archæol., vol. xix.

- ‘Thy suit is gained,’ the Duke replied,  
‘Our gallant minstrel be our guide.’  
‘Enough,’ he cried, ‘with joy I speed,  
‘Foremost to vanquish or to bleed.’
- “And still of Roland’s deeds he sung,  
While Norman shouts responsive rung,  
As high in air his lance he flung,  
    With well directed might;  
Back came the lance into his hand,  
Like urchin’s ball, or juggler’s wand,  
And twice again, at his command,  
    Whirled its unerring flight.—  
While doubting whether skill or charm  
Had thus inspired the minstrel’s arm,  
The Saxons saw the wondrous dart  
Fixed in their standard bearer’s heart.
- “Now thrice aloft his sword he threw,  
    ‘Midst sparkling sunbeams dancing,  
And downward thrice the weapon flew,  
Like meteor o’er the evening dew,  
    From summer sky swift glancing:  
And while amazement gasped for breath,  
Another Saxon groaned in death.
- “More wonders yet!—on signal made,  
    With mane erect, and eye-balls flashing,  
The well taught courser rears his head,  
    His teeth in ravenous fury gnashing;  
He snorts—he foams—and upward springs—  
    Plunging he fastens on the foe,  
And down his writhing victim flings,  
    Crushed by the wily minstrel’s blow.  
Thus seems it to the hostile band  
Enchantment all, and fairy land.
- “Fain would I leave the rest unsung:—  
The Saxon ranks, to madness stung,  
Headlong rushed with frenzied start,  
Hurling javelin, mace, and dart;  
No shelter from the iron shower  
Sought Taillefer in that sad hour;

Yet still he beckoned to the field,  
'Frenchman, come on—the Saxons yield—  
'Strike quick—strike home—in Roland's name—  
'For William's glory—Harold's shame.'  
Then pierced with wounds, stretched side by side,  
The minstrel and his courser died."

We have dwelt on the details of the tapestry with a prolixity which some may deem tedious. Yet surely the subject is worthy of it; for, in the first place, it is the oldest piece of needlework in the world—the only piece of that era now existing; and this circumstance in itself suggests many interesting ideas, on which, did our space permit, we could readily dilate. Ages have rolled away; and the fair hands that wrought this work have mouldered away into dust; and the gentle and affectionate spirit that suggested this elaborate memorial has long since passed from the scene which it adorned and dignified. In no long period after the battle thus commemorated, an abbey, consecrated to praise and prayer, raised its stately walls on the very field that was ploughed with the strife and watered with the blood of fierce and evil men. The air that erst rang with the sounds of wrath, of strife, of warfare, the clangour of armour, the din of war, was now made musical with the chorus of praise, or was gently stirred by the breath of prayer or the sigh of penitence; and where contending hosts were marshalled in proud array, or the phalanx rushed impetuous to the battle, were seen the stoled monks in solemn procession, or the holy brother peacefully wending on his errand of charity.

But the grey and time-honoured walls waxed aged as they beheld generation after generation



consigned to dust beneath their shelter. Time and change have done their worst. A few scattered ruins, seen dimly through the mist of years, are all that remain to point to the inquiring wanderer the site of the stupendous struggle of which the results are felt even after the expiration of eight hundred years.

These may be deemed trite reflections : still it is worthy of remark, that many of the turbulent spirits who then made earth echo with their fame would have been literally and altogether as though they never had been—for historians make little or no mention of them—were it not for the lasting monument raised to them in this tapestry by woman's industry and skill.

Matilda the Queen's character is pictured in high terms by both English and Norman historians. "So very stern was her husband, and hot, that no man durst do anything against his will. He had earls in his custody who acted against his will. Bishops he hurled from their bishoprics, and abbots from their abbacies, and thanes into prison ;" yet it is recorded that even his iron temper was not proof against the good sense, the gentleness, the piety, and the affection of a wife who never offended him but once ; and on this occasion there was so much to palliate and excuse her fault, proceeding as it did from a mother's yearnings towards her eldest son when he was in disgrace and sorrow, that the usually unyielding King forgave her immediately. She lived beloved, and she died lamented ; and, from the time of her death, the King, says William of Malmsbury, "refrained from every gratification."

Independently of the value of this tapestry as an historical authority, and its interest as being projected, and in part executed, by a lady as excellent in character as she was noble in rank, and its high estimation as the oldest piece of needlework extant—independently of all these circumstances, it is impossible to study this memorial closely, “rude and skilless” as it at first appears, without becoming deeply interested in the task. The outline engravings of it in the “*Tapisseries Anciennes Historiées*” are beautifully executed, but are inferior in interest to Mr. Stothart’s (published by the Society of Antiquarians), because these have the advantage of being coloured accurately from the original. In the study of these plates alone, days and weeks glided away, nor left us weary of our task.

## CHAPTER X.

NEEDLEWORK OF THE TIMES OF ROMANCE  
AND CHIVALRY.

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“ As ladies wont  
To finger the fine needle and nyse thread.”

*Faerie Queene.*

THOUGH, during bygone ages, the fingers of the fair and noble were often sedulously employed in the decoration and embellishment of the church, and of its ministers, they were by no means universally so. Marvellous indeed in quantity, as well as quality, must have been the stitchery done in those industrious days, for the “ fine needle and nyse thread ” were not merely visible but conspicuous in every department of life. If, happily, there were not proof to the contrary, we might be apt to imagine that the women of those days came into the world *only* “ to ply the distaff, broider, card, and sew.” That this was not the case we, however, well know ; but before we turn to those embroideries which are more especially the subject of this chapter, we will transcribe, from a recent work,\* an interesting detail of

\* Historical Memoirs of Queens of England.—H. Lawrance.

the household responsibilities of the mistress of a family in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

“ While to play on the harp and citole (a species of lute), to execute various kinds of the most costly and delicate needle-work, and in some instances to *pourtraye*,’ were, in addition to more literary pursuits, the accomplishments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the functions which the mistress of an extensive household was expected to fulfil were never lost sight of.

“ Few readers are aware of the various qualifications requisite to form the ‘ good housewife ’ during the middle ages. In the present day, when household articles of every kind are obtainable in any country town, and, with few exceptions, throughout the year, we can know little of the judgment, the forethought, and the nice calculation which were required in the mistress of a household consisting probably of three-score, or even more persons, and who, in the autumn, had to provide almost a twelve-month’s stores. There was the fire-wood, the rushes to strew the rooms, the malt, the oatmeal, the honey (at this period the substitute for sugar), the salt (only sold in large quantities), and, if in the country, the wheat and the barley for the bread—all to be provided and stored away. The greater part of the meat used for the winter’s provision was killed and salted down at Martinmas; and the mistress had to provide the necessary stock for the winter and spring consumption, together with the stockfish and ‘baconed herrings’ for Lent. Then at the annual fair, the only opportunity was afforded for purchasing those more especial articles of house-

wifery which the careful housewife never omitted buying—the ginger, nutmegs, and cinnamon, for the Christmas posset, and Sheer-Monday furmety; the currants and almonds for the Twelfth-Night cake (an observance which dates almost as far back as the Conquest); the figs, with which our forefathers always celebrated Palm-Sunday; and the pepper, the saffron, and the cummin, so highly prized in ancient cookery. All these articles bore high prices, and therefore it was with great consideration and care that they were bought.

“But the task of providing raiment for the family also devolved upon the mistress, and there were no dealers save for the richer articles of wearing apparel to be found. The wool that formed the chief clothing was the produce of the flock, or purchased in a raw state; and was carded, spun, and in some instances woven at home. Flax, also, was often spun for the coarser kinds of linen, and occasionally woven. Thus, the mistress of a household had most important duties to fulfil, for on her wise and prudent management depended not merely the comfort, but the actual well-being of her extensive household. If the winter’s stores were insufficient, there were no markets from whence an additional supply could be obtained; and the lord of wide estates and numerous manors might be reduced to the most annoying privations through the mismanagement of the mistress of the family.”

The “costly and delicate needle-work” is here, as elsewhere, passed over with merely a mention: It is, naturally, too insignificant a subject to task the attention of those whose energies are devoted



to describing the warfare and welfare of kingdoms and thrones. Thus did we look only to professed historians, though enough exists in their pages to evidence the existence of such productions as those which form the subject of our chapter, our evidence would be meagre indeed as to the minuter details: but as the "novel" now describes those minutiae of every day life which we should think it ridiculous to look for in the writings of the politician or historian, so the romances of the days of chivalry present us with descriptions which, if they be somewhat redundant in ornament, are still correct in groundwork; and the details gathered from romances have in, it may be, unimportant circumstances, that accidental corroboration from history which fairly stamps their faithfulness in more important particulars: and it has been shown, says the author of 'Godefridus,' by learned men, in the memoirs of the French Academy of Inscriptions, that they may be used in common with history, and as of equal authority whenever an inquiry takes place respecting the *spirit and manners of the ages* in which they were composed. But we are writing a dissertation on romance instead of describing the "clodes ryche," to which we must now proceed.

So highly was a facility in the use of the needle prized in these "ould ancient times," that a wandering damsel is not merely *tolerated* but *cherished* in a family in which she is a perfect stranger, solely from her skill in this much-loved art.

After being exposed in an open boat, Emare was rescued by Syr Kadore, remained in his castle, and there—

“ She tawghte hem to *sewe* and *marke*  
 All *maner of sylkyn werke*,  
 Of her they wer ful fayne.”\*

Syr Kadore says of her—

“ She ys the konnyngest wommon,  
 I trowe, that be yn Crystendom,  
 Of *werk* that y have sene.”

And again describing her—

“ She *sewed sylke werk yn bour*.”

This same accomplished and luckless lady had, princess though she was, every advantage of early tuition in this notable art, having been sent in her childhood to a lady called Abro, who not only taught her “*curtesye and thewe*” (virtue and good manners), but also

“ Golde and sylke for to *sewe*,  
 Amonge maydenes moo:”

evidently an old dame’s school; where, however, we may infer from the arrangement of the accomplishments taught, and the special mention of needle-work, that the extra expense would be for the *sewing*; whereas, in our time and country (or county), the routine has been, “REDING AND SOING, THREE-PENCE A WEEK: A PENY EXTRA FOR MANNERS.”

This expensive and troublesome acquirement—the art of sewing in “*golde and silke*”—was of general adoption: gorgeous must have been the appearance of the damsels and knights of those days, when their

“ — Clothys wyth bestes & byrdes wer *bete*,†  
 All abowte for pryde.”

\* Emare.

† *Bete*—inlaid, embroidered.

“By that light Amadis saw his lady, and she appeared more beautiful than man could fancy woman could be. She had on a robe of *Indian silk, thickly wrought with flowers of gold*; her hair was so beautiful that it was a wonder, and she had covered it only with a garland.” \*

“Now when the fair Grasinda heard of the coming of the fleet, and of all that had befallen, she made ready to receive Oriana, whom of all persons in the world she most desired to see, because of her great renown that was everywhere spread abroad. She therefore wished to appear before her like a lady of such rank and such wealth as indeed she was: the robe which she put on was adorned with *roses of gold, wrought with marvellous skill, and bordered with pearls and precious stones* of exceeding value.” †

“His fine, soft garments, wove with cunning skill,  
All over, ease and wantonness declare;  
These with her hand, such subtle toil well taught,  
For him, in silk and gold, Alcina wrought.” ‡

“Mayde Elene, al so tyte.  
In a robe of samyte, §  
Anoon sche gan her tyre,  
To do Lybeau's profyte  
In kevechers whyt,  
Arayde wyth golde wyre.  
A velwet mantyll gay,  
Pelored || wyth grys and gray,  
Sche caste abowte her swyre;  
A sercle upon her molde,  
Of stones and of golde,  
The best yn that empyre.” ¶

\* Amadis of Gaul, bk. i. ch. xv.

‡ Orl. Fur.: transl. by Rose.

|| *Pelorea*—furred.

† Ibid. bk. iv. ch. iii.

§ *Samyte*—rich silk.

¶ *Lybeaus Disconus*.

We read perpetually of “kercheves well schyre,\*

“Arayde wyth ryche gold wyre.”

But the labours of those days were not confined to merely good-appearing garments: the skill of the needle-woman—for doubtless it was solely attributable to that—could imbue them with a value far beyond that of mere outward garnish.

“She seyde, Syr Knight, gentyl and hende,†

I wot thy stat, ord, and ende,

Be naught aschamed of me;

If thou wylt truly to me take,

And alle wemen for me forsake

Ryche i wyll make the.

I wyll the geve an alner,‡

Imad of sylk and of gold cler,

Wyth fayr ymages thre;

As oft thou putttest the hond therinne

A mark of gold thou schalt wynne,

In wat place that thou be.”§

But infinitely more marvellous is the following:—  
“King Lisuarte was so content with the tidings of Amadis and Galaor, which the dwarf had brought him, that he determined to hold the most honourable court that ever had been held in Great Britain. Presently three knights came through the gate, two of them armed at all points, the third unarmed, of good stature and well proportioned, his hair grey, but of a green and comely old age. He held in his hand a coffer; and, having inquired which was the king, dismounted from his palfrey and kneeled before him, saying, ‘God preserve you, Sir! for you have made the noblest promise that ever king did, if you hold it.’

\* *Schyre*—clear.

‡ *Alner*—

† *Hende*—kind, obliging

§ *Launfal*.

‘What promise was that?’ quoth Lisuarte. ‘To maintain chivalry in its highest honour and degree: few princes now-a-days labour to that end; therefore are you to be commended above all other.’ ‘Certes, knight, that promise shall hold while I live.’ ‘God grant you life to complete it!’ quoth the old man: ‘and because you have summoned a great court to London, I have brought something here which becomes such a person, for such an occasion.’ Then he opened the coffer and took out a Crown of Gold, so curiously wrought and set with pearls and gems, that all were amazed at its beauty; and it well appeared that it was only fit for the brow of some mighty lord. ‘Is it not a work which the most cunning artists would wonder at?’ said the old knight. Lisuarte answered, ‘In truth it is.’ ‘Yet,’ said the knight, ‘it hath a virtue more to be esteemed than its rare work and richness: whatever king hath it on his head shall always increase his honour; this it did for him for whom it was made till the day of his death: since then no king hath worn it. I will give it you, sir, for one boon.’—— ‘You also, Lady,’ said the knight, ‘should purchase a rich mantle that I bring:’ and he took from the coffer the richest and most beautiful mantle that ever was seen; for besides the pearls and precious stones with which it was beautified, there were figured on it all the birds and beasts in nature; so that it looked like a miracle. ‘On my faith,’ exclaimed the Queen, ‘this cloth can only have been made by that Lord who can do everything.’ ‘It is the work of man,’ said the old knight; ‘but rarely will one be found to make its fellow: it should belong



to wife rather than maiden, for she that weareth it *shall never have dispute with her husband.*' Britna answered, ' If that be true, it is above all price; I will give you for it whatsoever you ask.' And Lisuarte bade him demand what he would for the mantle and crown." \*

But the robe which occupied the busy fingers of the Saracen king's daughter for seven long years, and of which the jewelled ornaments inwrought in it—as was then very usual—were sought far and wide, has often been referred to (albeit wanting in fairy gifts) as a crowning proof of female industry and talent. We give the full description from the Romance of 'EMARE,' in Ritson's collection :—

" Sone aftur yu a whyle,  
The ryche Kynge of Cesyle  
    To the Emperour gaun wende,  
A ryche present wyth hym he browght,  
A cloth that was wordylye wroght,  
    He wellcomed hym at the hende.†

" Syr Tergaunte, that nobyll knyghte hyghte,  
He presented the Emperour ryght,  
    And sette hym on hys kne,  
Wyth that cloth rychlyly dyght.  
Full of stones ther hit was pyght,  
    As thykke as hit myght be,  
Off topaze and rubyes,  
And other stones of myche prys,  
    That semely wer to se,  
Of crapowtes and nakette,  
As thykke ar they sette  
    For sothe as y say the.

\* Amadis of Gaul, bk. i. ch. xxx.

† *Hende*—kind, civil, obliging.

" The cloth was displayed sone,  
 The Emperoeur lokede therupone,  
     And myght hyt not se,  
 For glysteryng of the ryche ston  
 Redy syght had he non,  
     And sayde, How may thys be?  
 The Emperour sayde on hygh,  
 Sertes thys ys a fayry,  
     Or ellys a vanyte.  
 The Kyng of Cysyle answered than  
 So ryche a jewell ys ther non  
     In all Crystyante.

" The amerayle\* dowghter of hethennes  
 Made this cloth withouten lees,  
     And wrowghte hit all with pride,  
 And purtreied hyt with gret honour,  
 Wyth ryche golde and asowr,†  
     And stones on ylike a side;  
 And, as the story telles in honde,  
 The stones that yn this cloth stonde  
     Sowghte they wer full wyde.  
 Seven wynter hit was yn makynge,  
 Or hit was browght to endynge,  
     In herte ys not to hyde.

" In that on korner made was  
 Idoyne and Amadas,  
     With love that was so trewe,  
 For they loveden hem wit honour,  
 Portrayed they wer with trewe-love flour,  
     Of stones bryght of hewe,  
 Wyth carbankull and safere,  
 Kasydonys and onyx so clere,  
     Sette in golde newe,  
 Deamondes and rubyes,  
 And other stones of mychyll pryse,  
     And menstrellys with her gle.

\* Saracen king.

† *Asowr*—azure.

“ In that other korner was dyght,  
Trystram and Isowde so bryght,  
    That semely wer to se,  
And for they loved hem ryght,  
As full of stones ar they dyght,  
    As thykke as they may be,  
Of topase and of rubyes,  
And other stones of myche pryse,  
    That semely wer to se,  
With crapawtes and nakette,  
Thykke of stones ar they sette,  
    For sothe as y say the.

“ In the thyrddle korner, with gret honour,  
Was Florys and dame Blawncheflour,  
    As love was hem betwene,  
For they loved wyth honour,  
Purtrayed they wer with trewe-love-flower,  
    With stones bryght and shene.  
Ther wer knyghtes and senatowres,  
Emerawdes of gret vertues,  
    To wyte withouten wene,  
Deamondes and koralle,  
Perydotes and crystall,  
    And gode garnettes bytwene.

“ In the fowrthe korner was oon  
Of Babylone the sowdan sonne,  
    The amerayle's dowghter hym by,  
For hys sake the cloth was wrowght,  
She loved hym in hert and thowght,  
    As testy-moyeth thys storye.  
The fayr mayden her byforn  
Was purtrayed an unykorn,  
    With hys horn so hye,  
Flowres and bryddes on ylke a syde,  
Wyth stones that wer sowght wyde,  
    Stuffed wyth ymagerye.

" When the cloth to ende was wrought,  
 To the sowdan sone hit was browght,  
     That semely was of syghte :  
 ' My fadyr was a nobyll man,  
 Of the sowdan he hit wan,  
     Wyth maystrye and myghth ;  
 For gret love he yaf hyt me,  
 I brynge hit the in speyale,  
     Thys cloth ys rychely dyght.'  
 He yaf hit the Emperour,  
 He receyved hit wyth gret honour,  
     And thonkede hym fayr and ryght."

We must not dismiss this subject without recording a species of mantle much celebrated in romance, and which must have tried the skill and patience of the fair votaries of the needle to the uttermost. We all have seen, perhaps we have some of us been foolish enough to manufacture, initials with hair, as tokens or souvenirs, or some other such fooleries. In our mothers' and grandmothers' days, when "fine marking" was the *sine quâ non* of a good education, whole sets of linen were thus elaborately marked; and often have we marvelled when these tokens of grandmotherly skill and industry were displayed to our wondering and aching eyes. What then should we have thought of King Ryence's mantle, of rich scarlet, bordered round with the beards of kings, sewed thereon full craftily by accomplished female hands. Thus runs the anecdote in the 'Morte Arthur':—

" Came a messenger hastily from King Ryence, of North Wales, saying, that King Ryence had discomfited and overcomen cleaven kings, and everiche of them did him homage, and that was thus: they

gave him their beards cleane flayne off,—wherefore the messenger came for King Arthur's beard, for King Ryence had purfeled a mantell with king's beards, and there lacked for one a place of the mantell, wherefore he sent for his beard, or else he would enter into his lands, and brenn and slay, and never leave till he have thy head and thy beard. 'Well,' said King Arther, 'thou hast said thy message, which is the most villainous and lewdest message that ever man heard sent to a king. Also thou mayest see my beard is full young yet for to make a purfell of; but tell thou the king that—or it be long—he shall do to *me* homage on both his knees, or else he shall leese his head.'"

In Queen Elizabeth's day, when they were beginning to skim the cream of the ponderous tomes of former times into those elaborate ditties from which the more modern ballad takes its rise, this incident was put into rhyme, and was sung before her majesty at the grand entertainment at Kenilworth Castle, 1575, thus:—

"As it fell out on a Pentecost day,  
 King Arthur at Camelot kept his Court royall,  
 With his faire queene dame Guenever the gay,  
 And many bold barons sitting in hall;  
 With ladies attired in purple and pall;  
 And heraults in hewkes,\* hooting on high,  
 Cryed, *Largesse, largesse, Chevaliers tres hardie.*

'A doughty dwarfe to the uppermost deas  
 Right pertlye gan pricke, kneeling on knee;  
 With steven† ll stoute amids all the preas,

\* *Heweke*—herald's coat.

† *Steven*—voice, sound.



Sayd, Nowe sir King Arthur, God save thee, and see !  
 Sir Ryence of Northgales greeteth well thee,  
 And bids thee thy beard anon to him send,  
 Or else from thy jaws he will it off rend.

“ For his robe of state is a rich scarlet mantle,  
 With eleven kings beards bordered about,  
 And there is room lefte yet in a kante,\*  
 For thine to stande, to make the twelfth out :  
 This must be done, be thou never so stout ;  
 This must be done, I tell thee no fable,  
 Maugre the teethe of all thy rounde table.

“ When this mortal message from his mouthe past,  
 Great was the noyse bothe in hall and in bower,  
 The king fum'd ; the queen screecht ; ladies were aghast ;  
 Princes puff'd ; barons blustered ; lords began lower ;  
 Knights stormed ; squires startled, like steeds in a stower  
 Pages and yeomen yell'd out in the hall ;  
 Then in came Sir Kay, the king's seneschal.

“ Silence, my soveraignes, quoth this courteous knight,  
 And in that stound the stowre began still :  
 Then the dwarfe's dinner full deerely was dight ;  
 Of wine and wassel he had his wille :  
 And when he had eaten and drunken his fill,  
 An hundred pieces of fine coyned gold  
 Were given this dwarfe for his message bold.

“ But say to Sir Ryence, thou dwarfe, quoth the king,  
 That for his bold message I do him defye ;  
 And shortly with basins and pans will him ring  
 Out of North Gales ; where he and I  
 With swords, and not razors, quickly shall trye  
 Whether he or King Arthur will prove the best barbor :  
 And therewith he shook his good sword Excalábor.”

\* *Kante*—a corner.

Drayton thus alludes to the same circumstance:—

“ Then told they, how himselfe great Arthur did advance,  
To meet (with his Allies) that puissant force in France,  
By Lucius thither led; those Armies that while ere  
Affrighted all the world, by him strooke dead with feare:  
Th’ report of his great Acts that over Europe ran,  
In that most famous field he with the Emperor wan:  
As how great Rythons selfe hee slew in his repaire,  
Who ravisht Howell’s Neece, young Helena the faire;  
And for a trophy brought the Giant’s coat away,  
Made of the beards of kings.” \*——

And Spenser is too uncourteous in his adoption of the incident; for he not only levels tolls on the gentlemen’s beards, but even on the flowing and golden locks of the gentle sex:—

“ Not farre from hence, upon yond rocky hill,  
Hard by a streight there stands a castle strong,  
Which doth observe a custom lewd and ill,  
And it hath long mayntaind with mighty wrong:  
For may no knight nor lady passe along  
That way, (and yet they needs must passe that way,  
By reason of the streight, and rocks among,)  
But they that Ladies locks doe shave away,  
And that knight’s berd for toll, which they for passage pay.

“ A shamefull use, as ever I did heare,  
Said Calidore, and to be overthrowne.  
But by what means did they at first it reare,  
And for what cause, tell, if thou have it knowne.  
Sayd then that Squire: The Lady which doth owne  
This Castle is by name Briana hight;  
Then which a prouder Lady liveth none;  
She long time hath deare lov’d a doughty knight,  
And sought to win his love by all the meanes she might.

\* Drayton’s Polyolbion, Song 4.

“ His name is Crudor, who through high disdaine  
 And proud despight of his selfe-pleasing mynd,  
 Refused hath to yeeld her love againe,  
 Untill a Mantle she for him doe fynd,  
 With beards of knights and locks of Ladies lynd,  
 Which to provide, she hath this Castle dight,  
 And therein hath a Seneschall assynd,  
 Cald Maleffort, a man of mickle might,  
 Who executes her wicked will, with worse despight.” \*

“ To pluck the beard ” of another has ever been held the highest possible sign of scorn and contumely ; but it was certainly a refinement on the matter, for which we are indebted to the *Morte Arthur*, or rather probably, according to Bishop Percy, to Geoffrey of Monmouth’s history originally, for the unique and ornamental purpose to which these despoiled locks were applied. So particularly anxious was Charlemagne to shew this despite to an enemy that, as we read in *Huon de Bordeaux*, he despatched no less than fifteen successive messengers from France to Babylon to pull the beard of Admiral Gaudisse. And this, by no means pleasant operation, was to be accompanied by one even still less inviting.

“ Alors le duc Naymes, & tres tous les Barons, s’en retournèrent au palais avec le Roy, lequel s’assist sur un banc doré de fin or, & les Barons tous autour de luy. Si commanda qu’on luy amenast Huon, lequel il vint, et se mist à genoux devant le roy, ou luy priant moult humblement que pitié & mercy vouldist avoir de luy. Alors le roy le voyant en sa presence luy dist : Huon puisque vers moy veux estre accordé, si convient que faciez

\* *Faerie Queene*. Book vi.

ce que je vous or donneray. Sire, ce dist Huon, pour obeir à vous, il n'est aujourd'huy chose en ce monde mortel, que corps humain puisse porter, que hardiment n'osasse entreprendre, ne ia pour peur de mort ne le laisseray à faire, & fust à aller jusques à l'arbre sec, voire jusques aux portaux d'enfer combattre aux infernaux, comme fist le fort Hercule : avant qu' à vous ne fusse accordé. Huon, ce dist Charles, je cuide qu'en pire lieu vous enverray, car, de quinze messages qui de par moy y ont este envoyez, n'en est par revenu un seul homme. Si te diray ou tu iras, puis que tu veux qui de toy aye mercy, m'a volonté est, qu'il te convient aller en la cité de Babylonne, par devers diray, & gardes que sur ta vie ne face faute, quand là seras venu tu monteras en son palais, là ou tu attendras l'heure de son disner & que tu le verras assis à table. Si convient que tu sois armé de toutes armes, l'espee nuë au poing, par tel si que le premier & le plus grand baron que tu verras manger à sa table tu luy trencheras le chef quel qu'il soit, soit Roy, ou Admiral. Et apres ce te convient tant faire que la belle Esclarmonde fille à l'Amiral Gaudisse tu fiances, & la baises trois fois en la presence de son pere, & de tous sous qui la seront presens, car je veux que tu sçaches que c'est la plus belle pucelle qu'aujourd'huy soit en vie, puis apres diras de par moy à l'Admiral qu'il m'envoye mille espreuiers, mille ours, mille viautres, tous enchainez, & mille jeune valets, & mille des plus belles pucelles de son royaume, & avecques ce, convient *que tu me rapportes une poignee de sa barbe, et quatre de ses dents machoires.* Ha! Sire, dirent les Barons, bien

desirez sa mort, quant de tel message faire luy enchargez, vous dites la verité ce dit le Roy, car si tant ne fait que j'aye la barbe & les dents machelaires sans aucune tromperie ne mensonge, jamais ne retourne en France, ne devant moi ne se monstre. Car je le ferois pendre & trainer. Sire, ce dit Huon, m'avez vous dit & racompté tout ce que voulez que je face. Oui dist le Roy Charles ma volonté est telle, si vers moy veux avoir paix. Sire ce dit Huon, au plaisir de nostre Seigneur, je feray & fourniray vostre message."

In what precise way the beards were sewed on the mantles we are not exactly informed. Whether this royal exuberance was left to shine in its own unborrowed lustre, its own naked magnificence, as too valuable to be intermixed with the grosser things of earth: whether it was thinly scattered over the surface of the "rich scarlet;" or whether it was gathered into locks, perhaps gemmed round with orient pearl, or clustered together with brilliant emeralds, sparkling diamonds, or rich rubies—"Sweets to the sweet:" whether it was exposed to the vulgar gaze on the mantle, or whether it was so arranged that only at the pleasure of the mighty wearer its radiant beauties were visible:—on all these deeply interesting particulars we should rejoice in having any information; but, alas! excepting what we have recorded, not one circumstance respecting them has "floated down the tide of years." But we may perhaps form a correct idea of them from viewing a shield of human hair in the museum of the United Service Club, which may be supposed to have been *compiled* (so to



speak) with the same benevolent feelings as that of the heroes to whom we have been alluding. It is from Borneo Island, and is formed of locks of hair placed at regular intervals on a ground of thin tough wood: a refined and elegant mode of displaying the scalps of slaughtered foes. These coincidences are curious, and may serve at any rate to show that King Ryence's mantle was not the *invention* of the penman; but, in all probability, actually existed.

The ladies of these days did not confine their handiwork merely to the adornment of the person. We have seen that among the Egyptians the couches that at night were beds were in the daytime adorned with richly wrought coverlets. So amongst the classical nations

“—— the menial fair that round her wait,  
At Helen's beck prepare the room of state;  
Beneath an ample portico they spread  
The downy fleece to form the slumberous bed;  
And o'er soft palls of purple grain, unfold  
*Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold.*”

And during the middle ages the beds, not excluded from the day apartments, often gave gorgeous testimony of the skill of the needlewoman, and were among the richest ornaments of the sitting room, so much fancy and expense were lavished on them. The curtains were often made of very rich material, and usually adorned with embroidery. They were often also trimmed with expensive furs: Philippa of Hainault had a bed on which sea-syrens

were embroidered. The coverlid was often very rich :

“ The ladi lay in hire bed,  
With riche clothes bespred,  
Of gold and purple palle.”\*

“ Here beds are seen adorned with silk and gold.” †

“ ——— on a bed design’d  
With gay magnificence the fair reclin’d ;  
High o’er her head, on silver columns rais’d,  
With broidering gems her proud pavilion blaz’d.”

“ Thence pass’d into a bow’r, where stood a bed,  
With milkwhite furs of Alexandria spread :  
Beneath, a richly broider’d vallance hung ;  
The pillows were of silk ; o’er all was flung  
A rare wrought coverlet of phoenix plumes,  
Which breathed, as warm with life, its rich perfumes.” ‡

The array of the knights of these days was gorgeous and beautiful ; and though the materials might be in themselves, and frequently were costly, still were they entirely indebted to the female hand for the rich elegance of the *tout ensemble*. And the custom of disarming and robing knights anew after the conflict, whether of real or mimic war, to which we have alluded as a practice of classical antiquity, was as much or even more practised now, and afforded to the ladies an admirable opportunity of exhibiting alike their preference, their taste, and their liberality.

“ Amadis and Agrayes procceded till they came to the castle of Torin, the dwelling of that fair young damsel, where they were disarmed and

\* The Kyng of Tars.

† Orl. Fur.

‡ Partenopex of Blois.

mantles given them, and they were conducted into the hall." \*

" Thus they arrived at the palace, and there was he (the Green Sword Knight) lodged in a rich chamber, and was disarmed, and his hands and face washed from the dust, and they gave him a rose-coloured mantle." †

The romance of "Ywayne and Gawin" abounds in instances :

" A damisel come unto me,  
The semeliest that ever I se,  
Lufsumer lifed never in land,  
Hendly scho toke me by the hand,  
And sone that gentyl creature  
Al unlaced myne armure ;  
Into a chamber scho me led,  
And with a mantil scho me cled ;  
It was of purpur, fair and fine,  
And the pane of ermyne."

Again—

" The maiden redies hyr fal rath, ‡  
Bilive sho gert syr Ywayne bath,  
And cled him sethin (§) in gude scarlet,  
Forord wele with gold fret,  
A girdei ful riche for the nanes,  
Of perry (||) and of precious stanes."

And—

" The mayden was bowsom and bayne (§§)  
Forto unarme syr Ywayne,  
Serk and breke both sho hym broght,  
That ful craftily war wroght,  
Of riche cloth soft als the sylk,  
And tharto white als any mylk.  
Sho broght hym ful riche wedes to wer."

\* Amadis of Gaul.

† Ibid.

‡ Rath—speedily.

§ Sethin—afterward.

|| Perry—jewels.

§§ Bayne—ready.

On the widely acknowledged principle of "Love me, love my dog," the steed of a favoured knight was often adorned by the willing fingers of the fair.

" Each damsel and each dame who her obeyed,  
She task'd, together with herself, to sew,  
With subtle toil ; and with fine gold o'erlaid  
A piece of silk of white and sable hue :  
With this she trapt the horse." \*

The tabards or surcoats which knights wore over their armour was the article of dress in which they most delighted to display their magnificence. They varied in form, but were mostly made of rich silk, or of cloth of gold or silver, lined or trimmed with choice and expensive furs, and usually, also, having the armorial bearings of the family richly embroidered. Thus were women even the heralds of those times. Besides the acknowledged armorial bearings, devices were often wrought symbolical of some circumstance in the life of the wearer. Thus we are told in *Amadis* that the Emperor of Rome, on his black surcoat, had a golden chain-work woven, which device he swore never to lay aside till he had *Amadis* in chains. The same romance gives the following incident regarding a surcoat.

" Then *Amadis* cried to *Florestan* and *Agrayes*, weeping as he spake, good kinsman, I fear we have lost *Don Galaor*, let us seek for him. They went to the spot where *Amadis* had smitten down King *Cildadan*, and seen his brother last on foot ; but so many were the dead who lay there that they saw him not, till as they moved away the bodies, Flores-

\* *Orl. Fur.*, canto 23.

tan knew him by the sleeve of his *surcoat*, which was of azure, worked with silver flowers, and then they made great moan over him."

The shape of them, as we have remarked, varied considerably; besides minor alterations they were at one time worn very short, at another so long as to trail on the ground. But this luxurious style was occasionally attended with direful effects. Froissart names a surcoat in which Sir John Chandos was attired, which was embroidered with his arms in white sarsnet, argent a field gules, one on his back and another on his breast. It was a long robe which swept the ground, and this circumstance, most probably, caused the untimely death of one of the most esteemed knights of chivalry.

Sir John Chandos was one of the brightest of that chivalrous circle which sparkled in the reign of Edward the Third. He was gentle as well as valiant; he was in the van with the Black Prince at the battle of Cressy; and at the battle of Poitiers he never left his side. His death was unlooked for and sudden. Some disappointments had depressed his spirits, and his attendants in vain endeavoured to cheer them.

"And so he stode in a kechyn, warmyng him by the fyre, and his servantes jangled with hym, to thē tent to bring him out of his melancholy; his servantes had prepared for hym a place to rest hym: than he demanded if it were nere day, and therewt. there cāe a man into the house, and came before hym, and sayd,

'Sir, I have brought you tidynges.'

'What be they, tell me?'



‘ Sir, surely the frēchmen be rydinge abroad.’

‘ How knowest thou that ? ’

‘ Sir,’ sayd he, ‘ I departed fro saynt Saluyn with them ? ’

‘ What way be they ryden ? ’

‘ Sir, I can nat tell you the certentie, but surely they take the highway to Poitiers.’

‘ What Frēchmen be they ; canst thou tell me ? ’

‘ Sir, it is Sir Loys of Saynt Julyan, and Carlovēt the Breton.’

‘ Well, quoth Sir Johan Chandos, I care nat, I have no lyst this night to ryde forthe : they may happe to be encōutred though I be nat ther.’

“ And so he taryed there styll a certayne space in a gret study, and at last, when he had well aduysed hymselfe, he sayde, ‘ Whatsoever I have sayd here before, I trowe it be good that I ryde forthe ; I must retourne to Poictiers, and anone it will be day.’

‘ That is true sir,’ quoth the knightes about hym.

‘ Then,’ he sayd, ‘ make redy, for I wyll ryde forthe.’

“ And so they dyd.”

The skirmish commenced ; there had fallen a great dew in the morning, in consequence of which the ground was very slippery ; the knight’s foot slipped, and in trying to recover himself, it became entangled in the folds of his magnificent *surcoat* ; thus the fall was rendered irretrievable, and whilst he was down he received his death blow.

The barons and knights were sorely grieved. They “ lamentably complayned, and sayd, ‘ A, Sir

Johan Chandos, the floure of all chivalry, vnhappely was that glayue forged that thus hath woūded you, and brought you in parell of dethe:’ they wept piteously that were about hym, and he herde and vnderstode them well, but he could speke no worde.”—“For his dethe, his frendes, and also some of his enemyes, were right soroufull; the Englysshmen loued hym, bycause all noblenesse was founde in hym; the frenchmen hated him, because they doubted hym; yet I herde his dethe greatly complayned among right noble and valyant knightes of France\*.”

Across this surcoat was worn the scarf, the indispensable appendage of a knight when fully equipped: it was usually the gift of his “ladye-love,” and embroidered by her own fair hand.

And a knight would encounter fifty deaths sooner than part with this cherished emblem. It is recorded of Garcia Perez de Vargas, a noble-minded Spanish knight of the thirteenth century, that he and a companion were once suddenly met by a party of seven Moors. His friend fled: but not so Perez; he at once prepared himself for the combat, and while keeping the Moors at bay, who hardly seemed inclined to fight, he found that his scarf had fallen from his shoulder.

“He look’d around, and saw the Scarf, for still the Moors were near,  
And they had pick’d it from the sward, and loop’d it on a spear.  
‘These Moors,’ quoth Garci Perez, ‘uncourteous Moors they be—  
Now, by my soul, the scarf they stole, yet durst not question me!

\* Froissart, by Lord Berners, vol. i. p. 270.

“ ‘ Now, reach once more my helmet.’ The Esquire said him, nay,  
 ‘ For a silken string why should you fling, perchance, your life  
 away?’ ”

I had it from my lady,’ quoth Garci, ‘ long ago,  
 And never Moor that scarf, be sure, in proud Seville shall show.’

“ But when the Moslems saw him, they stood in firm array:  
 He rode among their armed throng, he rode right furiously.  
 ‘ Stand, stand, ye thieves and robbers, lay down my lady’s pledge,’  
 He cried, and ever as he cried, they felt his faulchion’s edge.

“ That day when the lord of Vargas came to the camp alone,  
 The scarf, his lady’s largess, around his breast was thrown :  
 Bare was his head, his sword was red, and from his pommel strung  
 Seven turbans green, sore hack’d I ween, before Garci Perez  
 hung.’ ”

It casts a redeeming trait on this butchering sort or bravery to find that when the hero returned to the camp he steadily refused to reveal the name of the person who had so cravenly deserted him.

But the favours which ladies presented to a knight were various ; consisting of “ jewels, ensigns of noblesse, scarfs, hoods, sleeves, mantles, bracelets, knots of ribbon ; in a word, some detached part of their dress.” These he always placed conspicuously on his person, and defended, as he would have done his life. Sometimes a lock of his fair one’s hair inspired the hero :

“ Than did he her heere unfolde,  
 And on his helme it set on hye,  
 With rede thredes of ryche golde,  
 Whiche he had of his lady.  
 Full richely his shelde was wrought,  
 With asure stones and beten golde,  
 But on his lady was his thought,  
 The yelowē heere what he dyd beholde.” \*

\* The Fair Lady of Faguell.

It is recorded in "Perceforest," that at the end of one tournament "the ladies were so stripped of their head attire, that the greatest part of them were quite bareheaded, and appeared with their hair spread over their shoulders yellower than the finest gold; their robes also were without sleeves; for all had been given to adorn the knights; hoods, cloaks, kerchiefs, stomachers, and mantuas. But when they beheld themselves in this woful plight, they were greatly abashed, till, perceiving every one was in the same condition, they joined in laughing at this adventure, and that they should have engaged with such vehemence in stripping themselves of their clothes from off their backs, as never to have perceived the loss of them."

A sleeve (more easily detached than we should fancy those of the present day) was a very usual token.

Elayne, the faire mayden of Astolat gave Syr Launcelot "a reed sleeve of scarlet wel embroudred with grete perlys," which he wore for a token on his helmet; and in real life it is recorded that in a serious, but not desperate battle, at the court of Burgundy, in 1445, one of the knights received from his lady a sleeve of delicate dove colour, elegantly embroidered; and he fastened this favour on his left arm.

Chevalier Bayard being declared victor at the tournament of Carignan, in Piedmont, he refused, from extreme delicacy, to receive the reward assigned him, saying, "The honour he had gained was solely owing to the sleeve, which a lady had given him, adorned with a ruby worth a hundred ducats." The

sleeve was brought back to the lady in the presence of her husband; who knowing the admirable character of the chevalier, conceived no jealousy on the occasion: "The ruby," said the lady, "shall be given to the knight who was the next in feats of arms to the chevalier; but since he does me so much honour as to ascribe his victory to my sleeve, for the love of him I will keep it all my life."

Another important adjunct to the equipment of a knight was the pennon; an ensign or streamer formed of silk, linen, or stuff, and fixed to the top of the lance. If the expedition of the soldier had for its object the Holy Land, the sacred emblem of the cross was embroidered on the pennon, otherwise it usually bore the owner's crest, or, like the surcoat, an emblematic allusion to some circumstance in the owner's life. Thus, Chaucer, in the "Knyghte's Tale," describes that of Duke Theseus:

"And by his banner borne is his *pennon*  
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete  
The Minotaure which that he slew in Crete."

The account of the taking of Hotspur's pennon, and his attempt at its recapture, is abridged by Mr. Mills\* from Froissart. It is interesting, as displaying the temper of the times about these comparatively trifling matters, and being the record of history, may tend to justify our quotations of a similar nature from romance.

"In the reign of Richard the Second, the Scots commanded by James, Earl of Douglas, taking advantage of the troubles between the King and his

\* Hist. Chivalry.



Parliament, poured upon the south. When they were sated with plunder and destruction they rested at Newcastle, near the English force which the Earl of Northumberland and other border chieftains had hastily levied.

“The Earl’s two sons were young and lusty knights, and ever foremost at the barriers to skirmish. Many proper feats of arms were done and achieved. The fighting was hand to hand. The noblest encounter was that which occurred between the Earl Douglas and Sir Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur. The Scot won the pennon of his foeman; and in the triumph of his victory he proclaimed that he would carry it to Scotland, and set it on high on his castle of Dalkeith, that it might be seen afar off.

“Percy indignantly replied, that Douglas should not pass the border without being met in a manner which would give him no cause for boasting.

“With equal spirit the Earl Douglas invited him that night to his lodging to seek for his pennon.

“The Scots then retired and kept careful watch, lest the taunts of their leader should urge the Englishmen to make an attack. Percy’s spirit burnt to efface his reproach, but he was counselled into calmness.

“The Scots then dislodged, seemingly resolved to return with all haste to their own country. But Otterbourn arrested their steps. The castle resisted the assault; and the capture of it would have been of such little value to them that most of the Scotch knights wished that the enterprise should be abandoned.

“Douglas commanded, however, that the assault

should be persevered in, and he was entirely influenced by his chivalric feelings. He contended that the very difficulty of the enterprise was the reason of undertaking it; and he wished not to be too far from Sir Henry Percy, lest that gallant knight should not be able to do his devoir in redeeming his pledge of winning the pennon of his arms again.

“Hotspur longed to follow Douglas and redeem his badge of honour; but the sage knights of the country, and such as were well expert in arms, spoke against his opinion, and said to him, ‘Sir, there fortuneth in war oftentimes many losses. If the Earl Douglas has won your pennon, he bought it dear, for he came to the gate to seek it, and was well beaten: another day you shall win as much of him and more. Sir, we say this because we know well that all the power of Scotland is abroad in the fields; and if we issue forth and are not strong enough to fight with them (and perchance they have made this skirmish with us to draw us out of the town), they may soon enclose us, and do with us what they will. It is better to loose a pennon than two or three hundred knights and squires, and put all the country to adventure.’”

By such words as these, Hotspur and his brother were refrained, but the coveted moment came.

“The hostile banners waved in the night breeze, and the bright moon, which had been more wont to look upon the loves than the wars of chivalry, lighted up the Scottish camp. A battle ensued of as valiant a character as any recorded in the pages of history; for there was neither knight nor squire but what did his devoir and fought hand to hand.”

The Scots remained masters of the field : but the Douglas was slain, and this loss could not be recompensed even by the capture of the Percy.

Little did the “gentle Kate” anticipate this catastrophe when her fairy fingers with proud and loving alacrity embroidered on the flowing pennon the inspiring watchword of her chivalric husband and his noble family—**ESPERANCE.**

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## CHAPTER XI.

## TAPESTRY.

THE term *tapestry* or *tapistry* (from *tapisser*, to line, from the Latin word *tapes*, a cover of a wall or bed), is now appropriated solely to woven hangings of wool and silk; but it has been applied to all sorts of hangings, whether wrought entirely with the needle (as originally indeed all were) or in the loom, whether composed of canvass and wool, or of painted cloth, leather, or even paper. This wide application of the term seems to be justified by the derivation quoted above, but its present use is much more limited.

In the thirteenth century the decorative arts had attained a high perfection in England. The palace of Westminster received, under the fostering patronage of Henry III., a series of decorations, the remains of which, though long hidden, have recently excited the wonder and admiration of the curious.\* “Near this monastery (says an ancient Itinerary) stands the most famous royal palace of England; in which is that celebrated chamber, on whose walls all the warlike histories of the whole Bible are painted with inexpressible skill, and explained by a regular and complete series of texts, beautifully written in

\* See Smith's History of the Ancient Palace of Westminster.

French over each battle, to the no small admiration of the beholder, and the increase of royal magnificence."

Round the walls of St. Stephen's chapel effigies of the Apostles were painted in oil; (which was thus used with perfectness and skill two centuries before its presumed discovery by John ab Eyck in 1410,) on the western side was a grand composition of the day of Judgment: St. Edward's or the "Painted Chamber," derived the latter name from the quality and profuseness of its embellishments, and the walls of the whole palace were decorated with portraits or ideal representations, and historical subjects. Nor was this the earliest period in which connected passages of history were painted on the wainscot of apartments, for the following order, still extant, refers to the *renovation* of what must previously—and at some considerable interval of time probably, have been done.

"Anno, 1233, 17 Hen. 3. Mandatum est Vicecomiti South'ton quod Cameram regis lambruscatam de castro Winton depingi faciat eisdem historiis quibus fuerat prius depicta."

About 1312, Langton, Bishop of Litchfield, commanded the coronation, marriages, wars, and funeral of his patron King Edward I., to be painted in the great hall of his episcopal palace, which he had newly built.

Chaucer frequently refers to this custom of painting the walls with historical or fanciful designs.

"And soth to faine my chambre was  
Ful wel depainted——  
And all the wals with colours fine  
Were painted bothe texte and glose,  
And all the Romaunt of the Rose."



And again :—

“ But when I woke all was ypast,  
For ther nas lady ne creture,  
Save on the wals old portraiture  
Of horsemen, hawkis, and houndis,  
And hurt dere all ful of woundis.”

Often emblematical devices were painted, which gave the artist opportunity to display his fancy and exercise his wit. Dr. Cullum, in his History of Hawsted, gives an account of an old mansion, having a closet, the panels of which were painted with various sentences, emblems, and mottos. One of these, intended doubtless as a hint to female vanity, is a painter, who having begun to sketch out a female portrait, writes “*Dic mihi qualis eris.*”

But comfort, or at least a degree of comfort, had progressed hand in hand with decoration. Tapestry, that is to say needlework tapestry, which, like the Bayeux tapestry of Matilda, had been used solely for the decoration of altars, or the embellishment of other parts of sacred edifices on occasions of festival, or the performance of solemn rites, had been of much more general application amongst the luxurious inhabitants of the South, and was introduced into England as furniture hanging by Eleanor of Castile. In Chaucer's time it was common. Among his pilgrims to Canterbury is a tapestry worker who is mentioned in the Prologue, in common with other “professors.”

“ An haberdasher and a carpenter,  
A webbe, a dyer, and a tapiser.”

And, again :—

“ I wol give him all that falles  
To his chambre and to his halles,  
I will do painte him with pure golde,  
And *tapite* hem ful many a folde.”

These modes of decorating the walls and chambers with paintings, and with tapestry, were indeed contemporaneous ; though the greater difficulty of obtaining the latter—for as it was not made at Arras until the fourteenth century, all that we here refer to is the painful product of the needle alone—many have made it less usual and common than the former. Pithy sentences, and metrical stanzas were often wrought in tapestry : in Wresil Castle and other mansions, some of the apartments were adorned in the Oriental manner with metrical descriptions called Proverbs. And Warton mentions an ancient suit of tapestry, containing Ariosto's Orlando, and Angelica where, at every group, the story was all along illustrated with short lines in Provençal or old French.

It could only be from its superior comfort that an article so tedious in manufacture as needlework tapestry could be preferred to the more quickly-produced decorations of the pencil ; it was also rude in design ; and the following description of some tapestry in an old Manor House in King John's time, though taken from a work of fiction, probably presents a correct picture of the style of most of the pieces exhibited in the mansions of the middle ranks at that period.

“In a corner of the apartment stood a bed, the tapestry of which was enwrought with gaudy colours representing Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Adam was presenting our first mother with a large yellow apple, gathered from a tree that scarcely reached his knee. Beneath the tree was an angel milking, and although the winged milkman sat on a stool, yet his head overtopped both cow and tree,

and nearly covered a horse, which seemed standing on the highest branches. To the left of Eve appeared a church; and a dark robed gentleman holding something in his hand which looked like a pincushion, but doubtless was intended for a book: he seemed pointing to the holy edifice, as if reminding them that they were not yet married. On the ground lay the rib, out of which Eve (who stood the head higher than Adam) had been formed; both of them were very respectably clothed in the ancient Saxon costume; even the angel wore breeches, which, being blue, contrasted well with his flaming red wings."

No one who has read the real blunders of artists and existing anachronisms in pictures detailed in "Percy Anecdotes," will think the above sketch at all too highly coloured; though doubtless the tapestry hangings introduced by Queen Eleanor which would be imitated and caricatured in ten thousand different forms, were in much superior style. The Moors had attained to the highest perfection in the decorative arts, and from them did the Spaniards borrow this fashion of hangings,\* and "the coldness of our climate (says her accomplished biographer, Miss Agnes Strickland, speaking of Eleanor,) must have made it indispensable to the fair daughter of the South, chilled with the damp stone walls of English Gothic halls and chambers." Of the chillness

\* But not from them would be derived the art of painting with the needle the representation of the human figure. Hence, perhaps, the awkward and ungainly aspect of these, in comparison with the arabesque patterns. From a fear of its exciting a tendency to idolatry Mohammed prohibited his followers from delineating the form of men or animals in their pictorial embellishments of whatever sort.

of these walls we may form some idea, from a feeling description of a residence which was thought sufficient for a queen some centuries later. In the year 1586, Mary, the unhappy Queen of Scots, writes thus:—

“In regard to my lodging, my residence is a place inclosed with walls, situated on an eminence, and consequently exposed to all the winds and storms of heaven. Within this inclosure there is, like as at Vincennes, a very old hunting seat, built of wood and plaister, with chinks on all sides, with the uprights; the intervals between which are not properly filled up, and the plaister dilapidated in the various places. The house is about six yards distant from the walls, and so low that the terrace on the other side is as high as the house itself, so that neither the sun nor the fresh air can penetrate it at that side. The damp, however, is so great there, that every article of furniture is covered with mouldiness in the space of four days.— In a word, the rooms for the most part are fit rather for a dungeon for the lowest and most abject criminals, than for a residence of a person of my rank, or even of a much inferior condition. I have for my own accommodation only wretched little rooms, and so cold, that were it not for the protection of the curtains and tapestries which I have had put up, I could not endure it by day, and still less by night.”\*

The tapestries, whether wrought or woven, did not remain on the walls as do the hangings of modern days: it was the primitive office of the grooms of the chamber to hang up the tapestry which in a royal progress was sent forward with the purveyor and

\* Von Raumer's Contributions, 297.

grooms of the chamber. And if these functionaries had not, to use a proverbial expression, "heads on their shoulders," ridiculous or perplexing blunders were not unlikely to arise. Of the latter we have an instance recorded by the Duc de Sully.

"The King (Henry IV.) had not yet quitted Monceaux, when the Cardinal of Florence, who had so great a hand in the treaty of the Vervins, passed through Paris, as he came back from Picardy, and to return from thence to Rome, after he had taken leave of his Majesty. The king sent me to Paris to receive him, commanding me to pay him all imaginable honours. He had need of a person near the Pope, so powerful as this Cardinal, who afterwards obtained the Pontificate himself: I therefore omitted nothing that could answer His Majesty's intentions; and the legate, having an inclination to see St. Germain-en-Laye, I sent orders to Momier, the keeper of the castle, to hang the halls and chambers with the finest tapestry of the Crown. Momier executed my orders with great punctuality, but with so little judgment, that for the legate's chamber he chose a suit of hangings made by the Queen of Navarre; very rich, indeed, but which represented nothing but emblems and mottos against the Pope and the Roman Court, as satirical as they were ingenious. The prelate endeavoured to prevail upon me to accept a place in the coach that was to carry him to St. Germain, which I refused, being desirous of getting there before him, that I might see whether everything was in order; with which I was very well pleased. I saw the blunder of the keeper, and reformed it immediately. The legate



would not have failed to look upon such a mistake as a formed design to insult him, and to have represented it as such to the Pope. Reflecting afterwards, that no difference in religion could authorise such sarcasms, I caused all those mottos to be effaced.”\*

In the sixteenth century† a sort of hanging was introduced, which, partaking of the nature both of tapestry and painting on the walls, was a formidable rival to the former. Shakspeare frequently alludes to these “painted cloths.” For instance, when Falstaff persuades Hostess Quickly, not only to withdraw her arrest, but also to make him a further loan : she says—

“By this heavenly ground I tread on, I must be fain to pawn both my plate and the *tapestry* of my dining chambers !”

Falstaff answers—

“Glasses, glasses is the only drinking, and for thy walls a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the Prodigal, or a German Hunting in water-work, is worth a thousand of these fly-bitten tapestries. Let it be ten pounds if thou canst. If it were not for thy humours, there is not a better wench in England ! Go wash thy face and draw thy action.”

In another passage of the play he says that his troops are “as ragged as Lazarus in the *painted cloth*.”

There are now at Hampton Court eight large pieces or hangings of this description ; being “The Triumphs of Julius Cæsar,” in water-colours, on

\* Sully’s Memoirs. We have, in a subsequent chapter, a more full account of this Tapestry.

† Gent.’s Mag., 1839.

cloth, and in good preservation. They are by Andrea Mantegna, and were valued at 1000*l.* at the time, when, by some strange circumstance, the Cartoons of Raphael were estimated only at 300*l.*

Tapestry was common in the East at a very remote era, when the most grotesque compositions and fantastic combinations were usually displayed on it. Some authors suppose that the Greeks took their ideas of griffins, centaurs, &c., from these Tapestries, which, together with the art of making them, they derived from the East, and at first they closely imitated both the beauties and deformities of their patterns. At length their refined taste improved upon these originals; and the old grotesque combinations were confined to the borders of the hanging, the centre of which displayed a more regular and systematic representation.

It has been supposed by some writers that the invention of Tapestry, passed from the East into Europe; but Guicciardini ascribes it to the Netherlanders; and assuredly the Bayeux Tapestry, the work of the Conqueror's Queen, shows that this art must have acquired much perfection in Europe before the time of the Crusades, which is the time assigned by many for its introduction there. Probably Guicciardini refers to woven Tapestry, which was not practised until the article itself had become, from custom, a thing of necessity. Unintermitting and arduous had been the stitchery practised in the creation of these coveted luxuries long, very long before the loom was taught to give relief to the busy finger.

The first [manufactories of Tapestry of any note

were those of Flanders, established there long before they were attempted in France or England. The chief of these were at Brussels, Antwerp, Oudenarde, Lisle, Tournay, Bruges, and Valenciennes. At Brussels and Antwerp they succeeded well both in the design and the execution of human figures and animals, and also in landscapes. At Oudenarde the landscape was more imitated, and they did not succeed so well in the figure. The other manufactories, always excepting those of Arras, were inferior to these.

The grand era of general manufactories in France must be fixed in the reign of Henry the IV. Amongst others he especially devoted his attention to the manufacture of Tapestry, and that of the Gobelins, since so celebrated, was begun, though futilely, in his reign. His celebrated minister, Sully, was entangled in these matters somewhat more than he himself approved.

1605. "I laid, by his order, the foundations of the new edifices for his Tapestry weavers, in the horse-market. His Majesty sent for Comans and La Planche, from other countries, and gave them the care and superintendence of these manufactures: the new directors were not long before they made complaints, and disliked their situation, either because they did not find profits equal to their hopes and expectations, or, that having advanced considerable sums themselves, they saw no great probability of getting them in again. The king got rid of their importunity by referring them to me."\*

1607. "It was a difficult matter to agree upon a price with these celebrated Flemish tapestry workers, which

\* Sully's Memoirs, vol. ii.

we had brought into France at so great an expense. At length it was resolved in the presence of Sillery and me, that a 100,000*l.* should be given them for their establishment. Henry was very solicitous about the payment of this sum; ‘Having,’ said he, ‘a great desire to keep them, and not to lose the advances we have made.’ He would have been better pleased if these people could have been paid out of some other funds than those which he had reserved for himself: however, there was a necessity for satisfying them at any price whatever. His Majesty made use of his authority to oblige De Vienne to sign an acquittal to the undertakers for linen cloth in imitation of Dutch Holland. This prince ordered a complete set of furniture to be made for him, which he sent for me to examine separately, to know if they had not imposed upon him. *These things were not at all in my taste*, and I was but a very indifferent judge of them: the price seemed to me to be excessive, as well as the quantity. Henry was of another opinion: after examining the work, and reading my paper, he wrote to me that there was not too much, and that they had not exceeded his orders; and that he had never seen so beautiful a piece of work before, and that the workman must be paid his demands immediately.”\*

The manufactory languished however, even if it did not become entirely extinct. But it was revived in the reign of Louis XIV., and has since dispersed productions of unequalled delicacy over the civilised world.

\* Sully's Memoirs, vol. iii.

It was called "Gobelins," because the house in the suburbs of Paris, where the manufacture is carried on, was built by brothers whose names were Giles and John Gobelins, both excellent dyers, and who brought to Paris in the reign of Francis I. the secret of dying a beautiful scarlet colour, still known by their name.

In the year 1667 this place, till then called "Gobelins' Folly," changed its name into that of "Hotel Royal des Gobelins," in consequence of an edict of Louis XIV. M. Colbert having re-established, and with new magnificence enriched and completed the king's palaces, particularly the Louvre and the Tuilleries, began to think of making furniture suitable to the grandeur of those buildings; with this view he called together all the ablest workmen in the divers arts and manufactures throughout the kingdom; particularly painters, tapestry makers from Flanders, sculptors, goldsmiths, ebonists, &c., and by liberal encouragement and splendid pensions called others from foreign nations.

The king purchased the Gobelins for them to work in, and laws and articles were drawn up, amongst which is one that no other tapestry work shall be imported from any other country.

Nor did there need; for the Gobelins has ever since remained the first manufactory of this kind in the world. The quantity of the finest and noblest works that have been produced by it, and the number of the best workmen bred up therein are incredible; and the present flourishing condition of the arts and manufactures of France is, in great measure, owing thereto.



Tapestry work in particular is their glory. During the superintendence of M. Colbert, and his successor M. de Louvois, the making of tapestry is said to have been practised to the highest degree of perfection.

The celebrated painter, Le Brun, was appointed chief director, and from his designs were woven magnificent hangings of Alexander's Battles—The Four Seasons—the Four Elements—and a series of the principal actions of the life of Louis XIV. M. de Louvois, during his administration, caused tapestries to be made after the most beautiful originals in the king's cabinet, after Raphael and Julio Romano, and other celebrated Italian painters. Not the least interesting part of the process was that performed by the *rentrayeurs*, or fine-drawers, who so unite the breadths of the tapestry into one picture that no seam is discernible, but the whole appears like one design. The French have had other considerable manufactories at Auvergne, Felletin and Beauvais, but all sank beneath the superiority of the Gobelins, which indeed at one time outvied the renown of that far-famed town, whose productions gave a title to the whole species, viz., that of Arras.

Walpole gives an intimation of the introduction of tapestry weaving into England, so early as the reign of Edward III., “De inquirendo de mysterâ Tapiciorum, London;” but usually William Sheldon, Esq., is considered the introducer of it, and he allowed an artist, named Robert Hicks, the use of his manor-house at Burcheston, in Warwickshire; and in his will, dated 1570, he calls Hicks “the only auter and beginner of tapistry and arras within

this realm." At his house were four maps of Oxford, Worcester, Warwick, and Gloucestershires, executed in tapestry on a large scale, fragments of which are or were among the curiosities of Strawberry-hill. We meet with little further notice of this establishment.

This beautiful art was, however, revived in the reign of James I., and carried to great perfection under the patronage of himself and his martyr son. It received its death blow in common with other equally beautiful and more important pursuits during the triumph of the Commonwealth. James gave £2000 to assist Sir Francis Crane in the establishment of the manufactory at Mortlake, in Surry, which was commenced in the year 1619. Towards the end of this reign, Francis Cleyn, or Klein, a native of Rostock, in the duchy of Mecklenburg, was employed in forming designs for this institution, which had already attained great perfection. Charles allowed him £100 a year, as appears from Rymer's *Fœdera*: "Know ye that we do give and grant unto Francis Cleyne a certain annuitie of one hundred pounds, by the year, during his natural life." He enjoyed this salary till the civil war, and was in such favour with the king, and in such reputation, that on a small painting of him he is described as "*Il famosissimo pittore Francesco Cleyn, miracolo del secolo, e molto stimato del re Carlo della gran Britania, 1646.*"

The Tapestry Manufacture at Mortlake was indeed a hobby, both of King James and Prince Charles, and of consequence was patronised by the Court. During Charles the First's romantic expedition to

Spain, when Prince of Wales, with the Duke of Buckingham, James writes—"I have settled with Sir Francis Crane for my Steenie's business, and I am this day to speak with Fotherby, and by my next, Steenie shall have an account both of his business, and of Kit's preferment and supply in means; but Sir Francis Crane desires to know if my Baby will have him to hasten the making of that suit of Tapestry that he commanded him." \*

The most superb hangings were wrought here after the designs of distinguished painters; and Windsor Castle, Hampton Court, Whitehall, St. James's, Non-such, Greenwich, and other royal seats, and many noble mansions were enriched and adorned by its productions. In the first year of his reign, Charles was indebted £6000 to the establishment for three suits of gold tapestry; Five of the Cartoons were wrought here, and sent to Hampton Court, where they still remain. A suit of hangings, representing the Five Senses, executed here, was in the palace at Oatlands, and was sold in 1649 for £270. Rubens sketched eight pieces in Charles the First's reign for tapestry, to be woven here, of the history of Achilles, intended for one of the royal palaces. At Lord Ilchester's, at Redlinch, in Somersetshire, was a suit of hangings representing the twelve months in compartments; and there are several other sets of the same design. Williams, Archbishop of York, and Lord Keeper, paid Sir Francis Crane £2500 for the Four Seasons. At Knowl, in Kent, was a piece of the same tapestry wrought in silk, containing the portraits of Vandyck, and St. Francis himself. At

\* Miscellaneous State Papers, vol. i. No. 26.

Lord Shrewsbury's (Heythorp, Oxfordshire) are, or were, four pieces of tapestry from designs by Vanderborght, representing the four quarters of the world, expressed by assemblages of the nations in various habits and employments, excepting Europe, which is in masquerade, wrought in chiaroscuro. And at Houghton (Lord Oxford's seat) were beautiful hangings containing whole lengths of King James, King Charles, their Queens, and the King of Denmark, with heads of the Royal Children in the borders. These are all mentioned incidentally as the production of the Mortlake establishment.

After the death of Sir Francis Crane, his brother Sir Richard sold the premises to Charles I. During the civil wars, this work was seized as the property of the Crown; and though, after the Restoration, Charles II. endeavoured to revive the manufacture, and sent Verrio to sketch the designs, his intention was not carried into effect. The work, though languishing, was not altogether extinct; for in Mr. Evelyn's very scarce tract intituled "*Mundus Muliebris*," printed in 1690, some of this manufacture is amongst the articles to be furnished by a gallant to his mistress.

One of the first acts of the Protectorate after the death of the king, was to dispose of the pictures, statues, tapestry hangings, and other splendid ornaments of the royal palaces. Cardinal Mazarine enriched himself with much of this royal plunder; and some of the splendid tapestry was purchased by the Archduke Leopold. This however found its way again to England, being re-purchased at Brussels for

£3000 by Frederick, Prince of Wales, father of George III.

In 1663 “two well-intended statutes” were made: one for the encouragement of the linen and *tapestry manufactures* of England, and discouragement of the importation of foreign tapestry:—and the other—start not, fair reader—the other “for regulating the packing of herrings.” \*

\* “The rich tapestry and arras hangings which belonged to St. James’s Palace, Hampton Court, Whitehall, and other Royal Seats, were purchased for Cromwell: these were inventoried at a sum not exceeding £30,000. One piece of eight parts at Hampton Court was appraised at £8,260: this related to the History of Abraham. Another of ten parts, representing the History of Julius Cæsar, was appraised at £5019.”

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## CHAPTER XII.

## ROMANCES WORKED IN TAPESTRY.

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“ And storied loves of knights and courtly dames,  
Pageants and triumphs, tournaments and games.”

ROSE'S PARTENOPEX.

It has been a favourite practice of all antiquity to work with the needle representations of those subjects in which the imagination and the feelings were most interested. The labours of Penelope, of Helen, and Andromache, are proverbial, and this mode of giving permanency to the actions of illustrious individuals was not confined to the classical nations. The ancient islanders used to work—until the progress of art enabled them to weave the histories of their giants and champions in Tapestry; and the same thing is recorded of the old Persians; and this furniture is still in high request among many Oriental nations, especially in Japan and China. The royal palace of Jeddo has profusion of the finest Tapestry; this indeed is gorgeous, being wrought with silk, and adorned with pearls, gold, and silver.

It was considered a right regal offering from one prince to another. Henry III., King of Castile, sent a present to Timour at Samarcand, of Tapestry

which was considered to surpass even the works of Asiatic artists in beauty: and when the religious and military orders of some of the princes of France and Burgundy had plunged them into a kind of crusade against the Turkish Sultan Bajazet, and they became his prisoners in the battle of Nicopolis, the King of France sent presents to the Sultan, to induce him to ransom them; amongst which Tapestry representing the battles of Alexander the Great was the most conspicuous.

Tapestry was not used in the halls of princes alone, but cut a very conspicuous figure on all occasions of festivity and rejoicing. It was customary at these times to hang ornamental needlework of all sorts from the windows or balconies of the houses of those streets through which a pageant or festal procession was to pass; and as the houses were then built with the upper stories far overhanging the lower ones, these draperies frequently hung in rich folds to the ground, and must have had, when a street was thus in its whole length appareled and partly roofed by the floating streamers and banners above—somewhat the appearance of a suite of magnificent saloons.

“ Then the high street gay signs of triumph wore,  
Covered with shewy cloths of different dye,  
Which deck the walls, while Sylvan leaves in store,  
And scented herbs upon the pavement lie.  
Adorned in every window, every door,  
With carpeting and finest drapery;  
But more with ladies fair, and richly drest  
In costly jewels and in gorgeous vest.”

When the Black Prince entered London with King John of France, as his prisoner, the outsides of the

houses were covered with hangings, consisting of battles in tapestry-work.

And in tournaments the lists were always decorated "with the splendid richness of feudal power. Besides the gorgeous array of heraldic insignia near the Champions' tents, the galleries, which were made to contain the proud and joyous spectators, were covered with tapestry, representing chivalry both in its warlike and its amorous guise: on one side the knight with his bright faulchion smiting away hosts of foes, and on the other side kneeling at the feet of beauty."

But the subjects of the tapestry in which our ancestors so much delighted were not confined to *bonâ fide* battles, and the matter-of-fact occurrences of everyday life. Oh no! The Lives of the Saints were frequently pourtrayed with all the legendary accompaniments which credulity and blind faith could invest them with. The "holy and solitary" St. Cuthbert would be seen taming the sea-monsters by his word of power: St. Dunstan would be in the very act of seizing the "handle" of his Infernal Majesty's face with the red-hot pincers; and St. Anthony in the "howling wilderness," would be reigning omnipotent over a whole legion of sprites. Here was food for the imagination and taste of our notable great-grandmother! Yet let us do them justice. If some of their religious pieces were imbued even to a ridiculous result, with the superstitions of the time, there were others, numberless others, scripture pieces, as chaste and beautiful in design, as elaborate in execution. The loom and needle united indeed brought these pieces to the highest perfection, but many a

meek and saintly Madonna, many a lofty and energetic St. Paul, many a subdued and touching Magdalene were produced by the unaided industry of the pious needlewoman. Nay, the whole Bible was copied in needlework; and in a poem of the fifteenth century, by Henry Bradshaw, containing the Life of St. Werburgh, a daughter of the King of the Mercians, there is an account “rather historical than legendary,”\* of many circumstances of the domestic life of the time. Amongst other descriptions is that of the tapestry displayed in the Abbey of Ely, on the occasion of St. Werburgh taking the veil there. This Tapestry belonged to king Wulfer, and was brought to Ely Monastery for the occasion. We subjoin some of the stanzas:—

“ It were full tedyous, to make descrypcyon  
Of the great tryumphes, and solempne royalte,  
Belongynge to the feest, the honour and provysyon,  
By playne declaracyon, upon every partye ;  
But the sothe to say, withouten ambyguyte,  
All herbes and flowres, fragraunt, fayre, and swete,  
Were strawed in halles, and layd under theyr fete.

“ Clothes of golde and arras † were hanged in the hall  
Depaynted with pyctures, and hystoryes manyfolde,  
Well wroughte and craftely, with precious stones all  
Glysteryng as Phebus, and the beten golde,  
Lyke an erthly paradyse, pleasaunt to beholde :  
As for the said moynes, ‡ was not them amonge,  
But prayenge in her cell, as done all novice yonge.

\* Warton.

† Arras, a very common anachronism. After the production of the arras tapestries, arras became the common name for all tapestries: even for those which were wrought before the looms of Arras were in existence.

‡ Moynes—nun. Lady Werburg

“ The story of Adam, there was goodly wrought,  
And of his wyfe Eve, bytwene them the serpent,  
How they were deceyved, and to theyr peynes brought;  
There was Cayn and Abell, offerynge theyr present,  
The sacryfyce of Abell, accepte full evydent:  
Tuball and Tubalcain were purtrayed in that place,  
The inventours of musyke and crafte by great grace.

“ Noe and his shyppe was made there curiously  
Sendynge forthe a raven, whiche never came again;  
And how the dove returned, with a braunche hastely,  
A token of comforte and peace, to man certayne:  
Abraham there was, standing upon the mount playne  
To offer in sacrifice Isaac his dere sone,  
And how the shepe for hym was offered in oblacyon.

“ The twelve sones of Jacob there were in purtrayture,  
And how into Egypt yonge Josephe was solde,  
There was imprisoned, by a false conjectour,  
After in all Egypte, was ruler (as is tolde).  
There was in pycture Moyses wyse and bolde,  
Our Lorde apperynge in bushe flammynge as fyre,  
And nothing thereof brent, lefe, tree, nor spyre.\*

“ The ten plages of Egypt were well embost,  
The chyldren of Israel passyng the reed see,  
Kynge Pharoo drowned, with all his proude hoost,  
And how the two table, at the Mounte Synaye  
Were gyven to Moyses, and how soon to idolatry  
The people were prone, and punysshed were therefore,  
How Datan and Abyron, for pryde were full youre.”†

Then *Duke* Joshua leading the Israelites; the  
division of the promised land; Kyng Saull and David,  
and “ prudent Solomon;” Roboas succeeding;

“ The good Kynge Esechyas and his generacyon,  
And so to the Machabus, and dyvers other nacyon.”

\* *Spyre*—twig, branch.

† *Youre*—burnt.



All these

“ Theyr noble actes, and tryumphes marcyall,  
Freshly were browdred in these clothes royall.”

“ But over the hye desse, in the pryncypall place,  
Where the sayd thre kynges sate crowned all,  
The best hallynge \* hanged, as reason was,  
Whereon were wrought the nine orders angelicall  
Dyvyded in thre ierarchyses, not cessynge to call  
*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus*, blessed be the Trynite,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth, three persons in one deyte,”

Then followed in order our Blessed Lady, the twelve Apostles, “ eche one in his figure,” the four Evangelists “ wrought most curiously,” all the disciples

“ Prechyng and techynge, unto every nacyon,  
The faythtes † of holy chyrche, for their salvacyon.”

“ Martyrs then followed, right manifolde ;” Confessors “ fressely embrodred in ryche tysheve and fyne.” Saintly virgins “ were brothered ‡ the clothes of gold within,” and the long array was closed on the other side of the hall by

“ Noble auneynt storyes, and how the stronge Sampson  
Subdued his enemyes by his myghty power ;  
Of Hector of Troye, slayne by fals treason ;  
Of noble Arthur, kynge of this regyon ;  
With many other mo, which it is to longe  
Playnly to expresse this tyme you amonge.”

But the powers of the chief proportion of needlewomen, and of many of the subsequent tapestry looms were devoted to giving permanence to those fables

*Hallynge*—Tapestry.

† *Faythtes*—*facts*, facts.

‡ *Brothered*—embroidered.

which, as exhibited in the Romances of Chivalry, formed the very life and delight of our ancestors in

“ ——— that happy season  
Ere bright Fancy bent to reason ;  
When the spirit of our stories,  
Filled the mind with unseen glories ;  
Told of creatures of the air,  
Spirits, fairies, goblins rare,  
Guarding man with tenderest care.”

These fables, says Warton, were not only perpetually repeated at the festivals of our ancestors, but were the constant objects of their eyes. The very walls of their apartments were clothed with romantic history.

We have mentioned the history of Alexander in Tapestry as forming an important part of the peace offering of the king of France to Bajazet, and probably there were few princes who did not possess a suit of tapestry on this subject ; a most important one in romance, and consequently a desired one for the loom.

There seems an innate propensity in the writers of the Romance of Chivalry to exaggerate, almost to distortion, the achievements of those whose heroic bearing needed no pomp of diction, or wild flow of imagination to illustrate it. Thus Charlemagne, one of the best and greatest of men, appears in romance like one whose thirst for slaughter it requires myriads of “ Paynims ” to quench.

Arthur, on the contrary, a very (if history tell truth) a very “so-so” sort of a man, having not one tithe of the intellect or the magnanimity of him to whom we have just referred—Arthur is invested in

romance with a halo of interest and of beauty which is perfectly fascinating; and it seems almost impossible to divest oneself of these impressions and to look upon him only in the unattractive light in which history represents him.

A person not initiated in romance would suppose that the real actions of Alexander—the subjugator of Greece, the conqueror of Persia, the captor of the great Darius, but the generous protector of his family—might sufficiently immortalize him. By no means. He cuts a considerable figure in many romances; but in one, appropriated more exclusively to his exploits, he “surpasses himself.” The world was conquered:—from north to south, and from east to west his sovereignty was acknowledged; so he forthwith flew up into the air to bring the aerial potentates to his feet. But this experiment not answering, he descended to the depths of the waters with much better success; for immediately all their inhabitants, from the whale to the herring, the cannibal shark, the voracious pike, the majestic sturgeon, the lordly salmon, the rich turbot, and the delicate trout, with all their kith, kin, relations, and allies, the lobster, the crab, and the muscle,

“The sounds and seas with all their finny drove”

crowd round him to do him homage: the oyster lays her pearl at his feet, and the coral boughs meekly wave in token of subjection. Doubtless in addition to the legitimate “battles” these exploits, if not fully displayed, were intimated by symbols in the Tapestry.

The Tale of Troy was a very favourite subject for

Tapestry, and was found in many noble mansions, especially in France. It has indeed been conjectured, and on sufficient grounds, that the whole Iliad had been wrought in a consecutive series of hangings. Though during the early part of the middle ages Homer himself was lost, still the "Tale of Troy divine" was kept alive in two Latin works, which in 1260 formed the basis of a prose romance by a Sicilian.

The great original himself however, had become the companion not only of the studious and learned, but also of the fair and fashionable, while yet the Flemish looms were in the zenith of their popularity. This subject formed part of the decoration of Holyrood House, on the occasion of the marriage of Henry the Seventh's daughter to James, King of Scotland in 1503. We are told in an ancient record, that the "hanginge of the queene's gret chammer represented the ystory of Troye toune, that the king's grett chammer had one table, wer was satt, hys chamberlayne, the grett sqyer, and many others, well served; the which chammer was haunged about with the story of Hercules, together with other ystorys." And at the same solemnity, "in the hall wher the qweene's company wer satt in lyke as in the other, an wiche was haunged of the history of Hercules."

The tragic and fearful story of Coucy's heart gave rise to an old metrical English Romance, called the 'Knight of Courtesy and the Lady of Faguel.' It was entirely represented in tapestry. The incident, a true one, on which it was founded, occurred about 1180; and was thus:—

"Some hundred and odd years since, there was

in France one Captain Coucy, a gallant gentleman of an ancient extraction, and keeper of Coucy Castle, which is yet standing, and in good repair. He fell in love with a young gentlewoman, and courted her for his wife. There was a reciprocal love between them ; but her parents understanding of it, by way of prevention, they shuffled up a forced match 'twixt her and one Monsieur Faiell who was a great heir : Captain Coucy hereupon quitted France in discontent, and went to the wars in Hungary against the Turk ; where he received a mortal wound, not far from Bada. Being carried to his lodging, he languished for some days ; but a little before his death he spoke to an ancient servant of his, that he had many proofs of his fidelity and truth ; but now he had a great business to intrust him with, which he conjured him by all means to do, which was, That after his death, he should get his body to be opened and then to take his heart out of his breast, and put in an earthen pot, to be baked to powder ; and then to put the powder in a handsome box, with that bracelet of hair he had worn long about on his left wrist, which was a lock of Mademoiselle Faiell's hair, and put it among the powder, together with a little note he had written with his own blood to her ; and after he had given him the rites of burial, to make all the speed he could to France, and deliver the box to Mademoiselle Faiell. The old servant did as his master had commanded him, and so went to France ; and coming one day to Monsieur Faiell's house, he suddenly met with him, who examined him because he knew he was Captain Coucy's servant, and finding him timorous and faltering in his



speech, he searched him, and found the said box in his pocket with the note, which expressed what was therein. He dismissed the bearer with menaces, that he should come no more near his house: Monsieur Faiell going in, sent for his cook, and delivered him the powder, charging him to make a little well-relished dish of it, without losing a jot of it, for it was a very costly thing; and commanded him to bring it in himself, after the last course at supper. The cook bringing in the dish accordingly, Monsieur Faiell commanded all to void the room, and began a serious discourse with his wife: However since he had married her, he observed she was always melancholy, and he feared she was inclining to a consumption; therefore he had provided for her a very precious cordial, which he was well assured would cure her. Thereupon he made her eat up the whole dish; and afterwards much importuning him to know what it was, he told her at last, she had eaten Coucy's heart, and so drew the box out of his pocket, and showed her the note and bracelet. In a sudden exultation of joy, she with a far-fetched sigh said, '*This is precious indeed,*' and so licked the dish, saying, '*It is so precious, that 'tis pity to put ever any meat upon't.*' So she went to to bed, and in the morning she was found stone dead."

But a more national, a more inspiriting, and a more agreeable theme for the alert finger or the busy loom is found in the life and adventures of that prince of combatants, that hero of all heroes, Guy Earl of Warwick. Help me, shades of renowned

slaughterers, whilst I record his achievements! Bear witness to his deed, ye grisly phantoms, ye bloody ghosts of infidel Paynims, whom his Christian sword mowed down, even as corn falls beneath the the reaper's sickle, till the redoubtable champion strode breast deep in bodies over fifteen acres covered with slaughtered foes! \* And all this from Christian zeal!

“ In faith of Christ a Christian true  
The wicked laws of infidels,  
He sought by power to subdue.

“ So passed he the seas of Greece,  
To help the Emperour to his right,  
Against the mighty Soldan's host  
Of puissant Persians for to fight:  
Where he did slay of Sarazens  
And heathen Pagans many a man,  
And slew the Soldan's cousin dear,  
Who had to name, Doughty Colbron.

“ Ezkelderer that famous knight,  
To death likewise he did pursue,  
And Almain, king of Tyre also,  
Most terrible too in fight to view:  
He went into the Soldan's host,  
Being thither on ambassage sent,  
And brought away his head with him,  
He having slain him in his tent.”

Or passing by his

“ Feats of arms  
In strange and sundry heathen lands,”

note his beneficent progress at home—

\* “ Fifteen acres were covered with the bodies of slaughtered Saracens; and so furious were the strokes of Sir Guy, that the pile of dead men, wherever his sword had reached, rose as high as his breast.”—Ellis, vol. ii.

“ In Windsor forest he did slay  
A boar of passing might and strength ;  
The like in England never was,  
For hugeness both in breadth and length.  
Some of his bones in Warwick yet,  
Within the castle there do lye ;  
One of his shield bones to this day  
Hangs in the city of Coventry.

“ On Dunsmore heath he also slew  
A monstrous wild and cruel beast,  
Call'd the dun cow of Dunsmore heath,  
Which many people had opprest ;  
Some of her bones in Warwick yet  
Still for a monument doth lie,  
Which unto every looker's view,  
As wondrous strange they may espy.

“ And the dragon in the land,  
He also did in flight destroy,  
Which did both men and beasts oppress,  
And all the country sore annoy :”

Or look we at him all doughty as he was, as the pilgrim of love, as subdued by the influence of the tender passion, a suppliant to the gentle Phillis, and ready to compass the earth to fulfil her wishes, and to prove his devotion :

“ Was ever knight for lady's sake  
So tost in love, as I, Sir Guy ;  
For Phillis fair, that Lady bright,  
As ever man beheld with eye ;  
She gave me leave myself to try  
The valiant knight with shield and spear,  
Ere that her love she would grant me,  
Who made me venture far and near.”

Or, afterwards view him as—

“ All clad in grey in Pilgrim sort,  
His voyage from her he did take,  
Unto that blessed, holy land,  
For Jesus Christ, his Saviour's sake.”

Lastly, recal we the time when the fierce and ruthless Danes were ravaging our land, and there was scarce a town or castle as far as Winchester, which they had not plundered or burnt, and a proposal was made, and per force acceded to by the English king to decide the struggle by single combat. But the odds were great : Colbrand the Danish champion, was a giant, and ere he came to a combat he provided himself with a cart-load of Danish axes, great clubs with knobs of iron, squared barrs of steel lances and iron hooks wherewith to pull his adversary to him.

On the other hand the English—and sleepless and unhappy, the king Athelstan pondered the circumstance as he lay on his couch, on St. John Baptist's night—had no champion forthcoming, even though the county of Hants had been promised as a reward to the victor. Roland, the most valiant knight of a thousand, was dead ; Heraud, the pride of the nation, was abroad ; and the great and valiant Guy, Earl of Warwick, was gone on a pilgrimage. The monarch was perplexed and sorrowful ; but an angel appeared to him and comforted him.

In conformity with the injunctions of this gracious messenger, the king, attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Chichester, placed himself at the north gate of the city (Winchester) at the hour of prime. Divers poor people and pilgrims entered thereat, and among the rest appeared a man of noble visage and stalwart frame, but wan withal, pale with abstinence, and macerated by reason of journeying barefoot. His beard was venerably long and he rested on a staff ; he wore a

pilgrim's garb, and on his bare and venerable head was strung a chaplet of white roses. Bending low, he passed the gate, but the king warned by the vision, hastened to him, and entreated him "by his love for Jesus Christ, by the devotion of his pilgrimage, and for the preservation of all England, to do battle with the giant." The Palmer thus conjured, underwent the combat, and was victorious.

After a solemn procession to the Cathedral, and thanksgiving therein, when he offered his weapon to God and the patron of the Church, before the High Altar, the pilgrim withdrew, having revealed himself to none but the king, and that under a solemn pledge of secrecy. He bent his course towards Warwick, and unknown in his disguise, took alms at the hands of his own lady—for, reader, this meek and holy pilgrim, was none other than the wholesale slayer, whose deeds we have been contemplating—and then retired to a solitary place hard by—

— "Where with his hand he hew'd a house,  
Out of a craggy rock of stone;  
And lived like a palmer poor,  
Within that cave himself alone."

Nor was this at all an unusual conclusion to a life of butchery; all the heroes of romance turned hermits; and as they all, at least all of Arthur's Round Table, were gifted with a very striking development of the organ of combativeness, their profound piety at the end of their career might not improbably give rise to a very common adage of these days regarding sinners and saints.

But here was a theme for Tapestry-workers! a



real original, genuine English romance; for though the only pieces now extant be, or may be, translated from the French, still there are many concurring circumstances to prove that the original, often quoted by Chaucer was an ancient metrical English one. That it is difficult to find who Sir Guy was, or in fact, to prove that there ever was a Sir Guy at all, is nothing to the purpose; leave we that to antiquarians, and their musty folios. Guy of Warwick was well known from west to east, even as far as Jerusalem, where, in Henry the Fourth's time, Lord Beauchamp was kindly received by those in high stations, because he was descended from

“A shadowy ancestor, so renowned as Guy.”

One tapestry on this attractive subject which was in Warwick Castle, before the year 1398, was so distinguished and valued a piece of furniture, that a special grant was made of it by King Richard II. conveying “that suit of arras hangings in Warwick Castle, which contained the story of Guy Earl of Warwick,” together with the Castle of Warwick and other possessions, to Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent. And in the restoration of forfeited property to this lord after his imprisonment, these hangings are particularly specified in the patent of King Henry IV., dated 1399.

And the Castle wherein the tapestry was hung was worthy of the heroes it had sheltered. The first building on the site was supposed to be coeval with our Saviour, and was called Caer-leon; almost overthrown by the Picts and Scots, it lay in ruins

till Caractacus built himself a manor-house, and founded a church to the honour of St. John the Baptist. Here was afterwards a Roman fort, and here again was a Pictish devastation. A cousin of King Arthur rebuilt it, and then lived in it—Arthgal, first Earl of Warwick, a Knight of the Round Table; this British title was equivalent to *Ursus* in Latin, whence Arthgal took the Bear for his ensign: and a successor of his, a worthy progenitor of our valiant Sir Guy, slew a mighty giant in a duel; and because this giant's delicate weapon was a tree pulled up by the roots, the boughs being snagged from it, the Earls of Warwick, successors of the victor, bore a ragged staff of silver in a sable shield for their cognisance.

We are told that,—

“ When Arthur first in court began,  
And was approved king,  
By force of arms great victoryes wanne,  
And conquest home did bring.  
Then into England straight he came  
With fifty good and able  
Knights, that resorted unto him,  
And were of his round table.”

Of these the most renowned were Syr Perceval, Syr Tristan, Syr Launcelot du Lac, Syr Ywain, Syr Gawain, Syr Galaas, Syr Meliadus of Leonnoys, Sir Ysaie, Syr Gyron, &c. &c., and their various and wondrous achievements were woven into a series of tales which are known as the “Romances of the Round Table.” Of course the main subject of each tale is interrupted by ten thousand varied episodes, in which very often the original object

seems entirely lost sight of. Then the construction of many of these Romances, or rather their want of construction, is marvellous; their genealogies are interminable, and their geography miraculous.

One of the most marvellous and scarce of these Romances, and one, the principal passages of which were frequently wrought into Tapestry, was the "Roman du Saint Greal," which is founded upon an incident, to say the least very peculiar, but which was perhaps once considered true as Holy Writ. St. Joseph of Arimathœa, a very important personage in many romances, having obtained the hanap, or cup from which our Saviour administered the wine to his disciples, caught in the same cup the blood which flowed from his wounds when on the Cross. After he had first achieved various adventures, and undergone an imprisonment of forty-two years, St. Joseph arrives in England with the sacred cup, by means of which numerous miracles are performed; he prepares the Round Table, and Arthur and his Knights all go in quest of the hanap, which by some, to us unaccountable, circumstance, had fallen into the hands of a sinner. All make the most solemn vow to devote their lives to its recovery; and this they must indeed have done, and not short lives either, if all recorded of them be true. None, however, but two, ever *see* the sacred symbol; though oftentimes a soft ray of light would stream across the lonesome wild, or the dark pathless forest, or unearthly strains would float on the air, or odours as of Paradise would entrance the senses, while the wandering and woeworn knight

would feel all fatigue, all sense of personal inconvenience, of pain, of sickness, or of sorrow, vanish on the instant ; and then would he renew his vows, and betake himself to prayer ; for though all unworthy to see the Holy Grail, he would feel that it had been borne on viewless pinions through the air for his individual consolation and hope. And Syr Galahad and Syr Perceval, the two chaste and favoured knights who, “after the dedely flesshe had beheld the spiritual things,” the holy St. Grael—never returned to converse with the world. The first departed to God, and “flights of angels sang him to his rest ;” the other took religious clothing and retired to a hermitage, where, after living “a full holy life for a yere and two moneths, he passed out of this world.”

But wide as is the range of the Romances of the “Round Table,” they form but a portion of those which solaced our ancestors. Charlemagne and his Paladins were, so to speak, the solar system round which another circle revolved ; Alexander furnished the radiating star for another, derived chiefly perhaps from the East, where numbers of fictitious tales were prevalent about him ; and many Romances were likewise woven around the mangled remains of classic heroes.

“The mightiest chiefs of British song  
Scorn’d not such legends to prolong ;  
They gleam through Spenser’s elfic dream,  
And mix in Milton’s heavenly theme :  
And Dryden in immortal strain,  
Had raised the ‘Table Round’ again.”

The Stories of the Tapestry in the Royal Palaces

of Henry VIII. are preserved in the British Museum.\*

These are some of them re-copied from Warton:—

In the tapestry of the Tower of London, the original and most ancient seat of our monarchs, there are recited, Godfrey of Bulloign; the Three Kings of Cologne; the Emperor Constantine; St. George; King of Erkenwald; the History of Hercules; Fame and Honour; the Triumph of Divinity; Esther and Ahasueras; Jupiter and Juno; St. George; the Eight Kings; the Ten Kings of France; the Birth of our Lord; Duke Joshua; the Riche History of King David; the Seven Deadly Sins; the Riche History of the Passion; the Stem of Jesse; Our Lady and Son; King Solomon; the Woman of Canony; Meleager; and the Dance of Maccabee.

At Durham Place were the Citie of Ladies (a Frence allegorical Romance); the Tapestry of Thebes and of Troy; the City of Peace; the Prodigal Son; Esther, and other pieces of Scripture.

At Windsor Castle the Siege of Jerusalem; Ahasueras; Charlemagne; the Siege of Troy; and Hawking and Hunting.

At Nottingham Castle, Amys and Amelion.

At Woodstock Manor, the tapestry of Charlemagne.

At the More, a palace in Hertfordshire, King Arthur, Hercules, Astyages, and Cyrus.

At Richmond, the arras of Sir Bevis, and Virtue and Vice fighting.

Among the rest we have also Hannibal, Holofe-

\* Harl. MSS. 1419.



rnes, Romulus and Remus, Æneas, and Susannah.

Many of these subjects were repeated at Westminster, Greenwich, Oatlands, Bedington in Surrey, and other royal seats, some of which are now unknown as such.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## NEEDLEWORK IN COSTUME.—PART I.

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“What neede these velvets, silkes, or lawne,  
Embroidery, feathers, fringe and lace.”—BP. HALL.

“Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,  
Save their own painted skins, our Sires had none.  
As yet black breeches were not.”—COWPER.

MANIFOLD indeed were the varieties in mode and material before that *beau ideal* of all that is graceful and becoming—the “black breeches”—were invented. For though in many parts of the globe costume is uniform, and the vest and the turban of a thousand years ago are of much the same make as now, this is not the case in the more polished parts of Europe, where that “turncoat whirligig maniac, yclept Fashion,” is the pole-star and beacon of the multitude of men, from him who has the “last new cut from Stultz,” to him who is magnificent and happy in the “reg’lar bang-up-go” from the eastern parts of the metropolis.

It would seem that England is peculiarly celebrated for her devotion at Fashion’s shrine; for we are told that “an Englishman, endeavoring sometime to write of our attire, made sundrie platformes for his purpose, supposing by some of them to find out one stedfast ground whereon to build the summe

of his discourse. But in the end (like an orator long without exercise) when he saw what a difficult peece of worke he had taken in hand, he gave over his travell, and onely drue the picture of a naked man, unto whome he gave a paire of sheares in the one hand, and a piece of cloth in the other, to the end he should shape his apparell after such fashion as himselfe liked, sith he could find no kind of garment that could please him anie while together, and this he called an Englishman. Certes this writer shewed himself herein not to be altogether void of iudgement, sith the phantasticall follie of our nation, even from the courtier to the carter, is such, that no forme of apparell liketh vs longer than the first garment is in the wearing, if it continue so long and be not laid aside, to receive some other trinket newlie devised.

“ And as these fashions are diverse, so likewise it is a world to see the costlinesse and the curiositie; the excesse and the vanitie; the pompe and the brauerie; the change and the varietie; and, finallie, the ficklenesse and the follie that is in all degrees; insomuch that nothing is more constant in England than inconstancie of attire.

“ In women, also, it is most to be lamented, that they doo now far exceed the lightnesse of our men (who nevertheless are transformed from the cap even to the verie shoo) and such staring attire as in time past was supposed meet for none but light housewives onlie, is now become a habit for chaste and sober matrons.

“ Thus *it is now come to passe, that women are become men, and men transformed into monsters.*”

This ever-revolving wheel is still turning; and so all-important now is THE MODE that one half of the world is fully occupied in providing for the personal embellishment of the other half and themselves; and could we contemplate the possibility of a return to the primitive simplicity of our ancient "sires," we must look in the same picture on one half of the world as useless—as a drug on the face of creation. Why, what a desert would it be were all dyers, fullers, cleaners, spinners, weavers, printers, mercers and milliners, haberdashers and modistes, silk-men and manufacturers, cotton-lords and fustian-men, tailors and habit makers, mantuamakers and corset professors, exploded? We pass over pin and needle makers, comb and brush manufacturers, jewellers, &c. The ladies would have nothing to live for; (for on grave authority it has been said, that "woman is an animal that delights in the toilette;") the gentlemen nothing to solace them. "The toilette" is the very zest of life with both; and if ladies are more successful in the results of their devoirs to it, it is because "*nous sommes faites pour embellir le monde,*" and not because gentlemen practice its duties with less zeal, devotion, or assiduity—as many a valet can testify when contemplating his modish patron's daily heap of "failures." Indeed to put out of view the more obvious, weighty, and important cares attached to the due selection and arrangement of coats, waistcoats, and indispensables, the science of "Cravatiana" alone is one which makes heavy claims on the time, talents, and energies of the thorough-going gentleman of fashion. He should be thoroughly versed in all its

varieties—The Royal George: The Plain Bow: The Military: The Ball Room: The Corsican: The Hibernian Tie: The Eastern Tie: The Hunting Tie: The Yankee Tie: (the “alone original” one)—The Osbaldiston Tie: The Mail Coach Tie: The Indian Tie, &c. &c. &c.

Though of these and their numberless offshoots, the Yankee Tie lays most claim to originality, the Ball Room one is considered the most exquisite, and requires the greatest practice. It is thus described by a “talented” professor:—

“The cloth, of virgin white, well starched and folded to the proper depth, should be made to sit easy and graceful on the neck, neither too tight nor loose; but with a gentle pressure, curving inwards from the further extension of the chin, down the throat to the centre dent in the middle of the neck. This should be the point for a slight dent, extending from under each ear, between which, more immediately under the chin, there should be another slight horizontal dent just above the former one. It has no tie; the ends, crossing each other in broad folds in front, are secured to the braces, or behind the back, by means of a piece of white tape. A brilliant broach or pin is generally made use of to secure more effectually the crossing, as well as to give an additional effect to the neckcloth.”

What a world of wit and invention—what a fund of fancy and taste—what a mine of zeal and ability would be lost to the world, “if those troublesome disguises which we wear” were reduced to their old simplicity of form and material! Industry and talent would be at discount, for want of materials



whereon to display themselves; and money would be such a drug, that politicians would declaim on the miseries of being *without* a national debt. Commerce, in many of its most important branches, would be exploded; the "manufacturing districts" would be annihilated; the "agricultural interest" would, consequently and necessarily, be at a "very low ebb;" and the "New World," the magnificent and imperial empress (that is to be) of the whole earth, might sink again to the embraces of those minute and wonderful artificers from whom, I suppose, she at first proceeded—the coral insects; for who would want cotton! No, no. Selfish preferences, individual wishes, must merge in the general good of the human race; and however "their own painted skins" might suffice our "sires," clothing, "sumptuous," as well as "for use," must decorate ourselves.

To whom, then, are the fullers, the dyers, the cleaners—to whom are the spinners and weavers, and printers and mercers, and milliners and haberdashers, and modistes, and silk-men and manufacturers, cotton lords and fustian men, mantua-makers and corset professors, indebted for that nameless grace, that exquisite finish and appropriateness, which gives to all their productions their charm and their utility? — To the NEEDLEWOMAN, assuredly. For though the raw materials have been grown at Sea Island and shipped at New-York,—have been consigned to the Liverpool broker and sold to the Manchester merchant, and turned over to the manufacturer, and spun and woven, and bleached and printed, and placed in the custody of the warehouseman, or on the shelf of the shopkeeper—of what good would it

be that we had a fifty-yard length of calico to shade our oppressed limbs on a "dog-day," if we had not the means also to render that material agreeably available? Yet not content with merely rendering it available, this beneficent fairy, the needlewoman, casts, "as if by the spell of enchantment, that ineffable grace over beauty which the choice and arrangement of dress is calculated to bestow." For the love of becoming ornament—we quote no less an authority than the historian of the 'State of Europe in the Middle Ages,'—"is not, perhaps, to be regarded in the light of vanity; it is rather an instinct which woman has received from Nature to give effect to those charms which are her defence." And if it be necessary to woman with her charms, is it not tenfold necessary to those who—Heaven help them!—have few charms whereof to boast? For, as Harrison says, "it is now come to passe that men are transformed into monsters."

"Better be out of the world than out of the fashion," is a proverb which, from the universal assent which has in all ages been given to it, has now the force of an axiom. It was this self evident proposition which emboldened the beau of the fourteenth century, in spite of the prohibitions of popes and senators,—in spite of the more touching personal inconvenience, and even risk and danger, attendant thereupon—to persist in wearing shoes of so preposterous a length, that the toes were obliged to be fastened with chains to the girdle ere the happy votary of fashion could walk across his own parlour! Happy was the favourite of Cræsus, who could display chain upon chain of massy gold wreathed

and intertwined from the waistband to the shoe, until he seemed almost weighed down by the burthen of his own wealth. Wrought silver did excellently well for those who could not produce gold; and for those who possessed not either precious metal, and who yet felt they "might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion," latteen chains, silken cords, aye, and cords of even less costly description, were pressed into service to tie up the *crackowes*, or piked shoes. For in that day, as in this, "the squire endeavours to outshine the knight, the knight the baron, the baron the earl, the earl the king, in dress." To complete the outrageous absurdity of these shoes, the upper parts of them were cut in imitation of a church-window, to which fashion Chaucer refers when describing the dress of Absalom, the Parish Clerk. He—

"Had Paul 'is windowes corven on his shose."

Despite the decrees of councils, the bulls of the Pope, and the declamations of the Clergy, this ridiculous fashion was in vogue near three centuries.

And the party-coloured hose, which were worn about the same time, were a fitting accompaniment for the crackowes. We feel some difficulty in realising the idea that gentlemen, only some half century ago, really dressed in the gay and showy habiliments which are now indicative only of a footman; but it is more difficult to believe, what was nevertheless the fact, that the most absurd costume in which the "fool" by profession can now be decked on the stage, can hardly compete in absurdity with the *outré* costume of a beau or a belle of the fourteenth century.

The shoes we have referred to: the garments, male or female, were divided in the middle down the whole length of the person, and one half of the body was clothed in one colour, the other half in the most opposite one that could be selected. The men's garments fitted close to the shape; and while one leg and thigh rejoiced in flaming yellow or sky-blue, the other blushed in deep crimson. John of Gaunt is portrayed in a habit, one half white, the other a dark blue; and Mr. Strutt has an engraving of a group assembled on a memorable occasion, where one of the figures has a boot on one leg and a shoe on the other. The Dauphiness of Auvergne, wife to Louis the Good, Duke of Bourbon, born 1360, is painted in a garb of which one half all the way down is blue, powdered with gold fleurs-de-lys, and the other half to the waist is gold, with a blue fish or dolphin (a cognizance, doubtless) on it, and from the waist to the feet is crimson, with white "fishy" ornaments; one sleeve is blue and gold, the other crimson and gold.

In addition to these absurd garments, the women dressed their heads so high that they were obliged to wear a sort of curved horn on each side, in order to support the enormous superstructure of feathers and furbelows. And these are what are meant by the "horned head-dresses" so often referred to in old authors. It is said that, when Isabel of Bavaria kept her court at Vincennes, A.D. 1416, it was necessary to make all the doors of the palace both higher and wider, to admit the head-dresses of the queen and her ladies, which were all of this horned kind.

This high bonnet had been worn, under various modifications, ever since the fashion was brought from the East in the time of the Crusades. Some were of a sugar-loaf form, three feet in height; and some cylindrical, but still very high. The French modistes of that day called this formidable head-gear *bonnet à la Syrienne*. But our author says, if female vanity be violently restrained in one point, it is sure to break out in another; and Romish anathemas having abolished curls from shading fair brows, so much the more attention was paid to head-gear, that the bonnets and caps increased every year most awfully in height and size, and were made in the form of crescents, pyramids, and horns of such tremendous dimensions, that the old chronicler Juvenal des Ursins makes this pathetic lamentation in his History of Charles VI. :—

“Et avoient les dames et damoyelles de chacun costé, deux grandes oreilles si larges, que quand elles vouloient passer par l’huis d’une chambre il fallait qu’elles se tournassent de costé et baisassent, ou elles n’eussent pu passer:” that is, “on every side old ladies and young ladies were seen with such high and monstrous ears (or horns), that when they wanted to enter a room they were obliged perforce to stoop and crouch sideways, or they could not pass.” At last a regular attack was made on the high head-gear of the fifteenth century by a popular monk, in his sermons at Nôtre Dame, in which he so pathetically lamented the sinfulness and enormities of such a fashion, that the ladies, to show their contrition, made *auto da fës* of their Syrian bonnets in the public squares and market-places; and as the



Church fulminated against them all over Europe, the example of Paris was universally followed.

Many attempts had previously been made by zealous preachers to effect this alteration. In the previous century a Carmelite in the province of Bretagne preached against this fashion, without the power to annihilate it: all that the ladies did was to change the particular shape of the huge coiffures after every sermon. "No sooner," says the chronicler, "had he departed from one district, than the dames and damoysselles, who, like frightened snails, had drawn in their horns, shot them out again longer than ever; for nowhere were the *hennins* (so called, abbreviated from *gehinnin*, incommodious,) larger, more pompous or proud, than in the cities through which the Carmelite had passed.

"All the world was totally reversed and disordered by these fashions, and above all things by the strange accoutrements on the heads of the ladies. It was a portentous time, for some carried huge towers on their foreheads an ell high; others still higher caps, with sharp points, like staples, from the top of which streamed long crapes, fringed with gold, like banners." Alas, alas! ladies, dames, and demoiselles were of importance in those days! When do we hear, in the present times, of Church and State interfering to regulate the patterns of their bonnets?" \*

It is no wonder that fashions so very extreme and absurd should call forth animadversion from various quarters. Thus wrote Petrarch in 1366:—

"Who can see with patience the monstrous, fantastical inventions which the people of our times

\* Lady's Magazine.

have invented to deform, rather than adorn, their persons? Who can behold without indignation their long pointed shoes; their caps with feathers; their hair twisted and hanging down like tails; the foreheads of young men, as well as women, formed into a kind of furrows with ivory-headed pins; their bellies so cruelly squeezed with cords, that they suffer as much pain from vanity as the martyrs suffered for religion? Our ancestors would not have believed, and I know not if posterity will believe, that it was possible for the wit of this vain generation of ours to invent so many base, barbarous, horrid, ridiculous fashions (besides those already mentioned) to disfigure and disgrace itself, as we have the mortification to see every day."

And thus Chaucer, a few years later:—

"Alass! may not a man see as in our daies the sinnefull costlew array of clothing, and namely in too much superfluite, or else in too disordinate scantinesse: as to the first, not only the cost of embrauder, the disguysed indenting, or barring, ounding, playting, wynding, or bending, and semblable waste of clothe in vanitie." The common people also "were besotted in excesse of apparell, in wide surcoats reaching to their loines, some in a garment reaching to their heels, close before and strowting out on the sides, so that on the back they make men seem women, and this they called by a ridiculous name, *gowne*," &c. &c.

Before this time the legislature had interfered, though with little success: they passed laws at Westminster, which were said to be made "to prevent that destruction and poverty with which the whole

kingdom was threatened, by the outrageous, excessive expenses of many persons in their apparel, above their ranks and fortunes."

Sumptuary edicts, however, are of little avail, if not supported in "influential quarters." King Richard II. affected the utmost splendour of attire, and he had one coat alone which was valued at 30,000 marks: it was richly embroidered and inwrought with gold and precious stones. It is not in human nature, at least in human nature of the "more honourable" gender, to be outdone, even by a king. Gorgeous and glittering was the raiment adopted by the satellites of the court, and, heedless of "that destruction and poverty with which the whole kingdom was threatened," they revelled in magnificence. Of one alone, Sir John Arundel, it is recorded, that he had at one time fifty-two suits of cloth of gold tissue. At this time, says the old Chronicle,

"Cut werke was great bothe in court and tounes,  
Bothe in mens hoddies, and also in their gounes,  
Brouder and furies, and gold smith werke ay newe,  
In many a wyse, eche day they did renewe."

Unaccountable as it may seem, this rage of expense and show in apparel reached even the (then) poverty-stricken sister country Scotland; and in 1457 laws were enacted to suppress it.

It is told of William Rufus, that one morning while putting on his new boots he asked his chamberlain what they cost; and when he replied "three shillings," indignantly and in a rage he cried out, "you—how long has the king worn boots of so paltry a price? Go, and bring me a pair worth a mark of silver." He went, and bringing him a much

cheaper pair, told him falsely that they cost as much as he had ordered: "Ay," said the king, "these are suitable to royal majesty."

This is merely a specimen of the monarch's shallow-headed extravagance; but the costume of his time and that immediately preceding it was infinitely superior in grace and dignity to that of the fantastical period we have been describing. The English at this period were admired by all other nations, and especially *by the French*, from whom in subsequent periods *we* have copied so servilely, for the richness and elegance of their attire. With a tunic simply confined at the waist, over this, when occasion required, a full and flowing mantle, with a veil confined to the back of the head with a golden circlet, her dark hair simply braided over her beautiful and intelligent brow and waving on her fair throat, the wife of the Conqueror looked every inch a queen, and what was more, she looked a modest, a dignified, and a beautiful woman.

The male attire was of the same flowing and majestic description: and the "brutal" Anglo-Saxons and the "barbarous" Normans had more delicacy than to display every division of limb or muscle which nature formed, and more taste than to invent divisions where, Heaven knows, nature never meant them to be. The simple *coiffure* required little care and attendance, but if a fastening did happen to give way, the Anglo-Norman lady could raise her hand to fasten it if she chose. The arm was not pinioned by the fiat of a *modiste*.

And the material of a dress of those days was as rich as the mode was elegant. Silk indeed was not

common; the first that was seen in the country was in 780, when Charlemagne sent Offa, King of Mercia, a belt and two vests of that beautiful material; but from the particular record made of silk mantles worn by two ladies at a ball at Kenilworth in 1286, we may fairly infer that till this period silk was not often used but as

“ ——— a robe pontifical,  
Ne’er seen but wonder’d at.”

Occasionally indeed it was used, but only by persons of the highest rank and wealth. But the woollens were of beautiful texture, and Britain was early famous in the art of producing the richest dyes. The Welsh are still remarkable for extracting beautiful tints from the commonest plants, such most probably as were used by the Britons anciently; and it is worthy of note that the South Sea cloths, manufactured from the inner bark of trees, have the same stripes and chequers, and indeed the identical patterns of the Welsh, and, as supposed, of the ancient Britons. Linen was fine and beautiful; and if it had not been so, the rich and varied embroidery with which it was decorated would have set off a coarser material.

Furs of all sorts were in great request, and a mantle of regal hue, lined throughout with vair or sable, and decorated with bands of gold lace and flowers of the richest embroidery, interspersed with pearls, clasped on the shoulder with the most precious gems, and looped, if requisite, with golden tassels, was a garment at which a nobleman, even of these days, need not look askance.



Robert Bloet, second bishop of Lincoln, made a present to Henry I. of a cloak of exquisitely fine cloth, lined with black sables with white spots, which cost a sum equivalent to £1500 of our money. The robes of females of rank were always bordered with a belt of rich needlework; their embroidered girdles were inlaid, or rather inwrought, with gold, pearls, and precious stones, and from them was usually suspended a large purse or pouch, on which the skill of the most accomplished needlewomen was usually expended.

This rich and becoming mode of dress was gradually innovated upon until caprice reigned paramount over the national wardrobe. For "fashion is essentially caprice; and fashion in dress the caprice of milliners and tailors, with whom *recherche* and exaggeration supply the place of education and principle." That this modern definition applied as accurately to former times as these, an instance may suffice to show. Richard I. had a cloak made, at enormous cost, with precious and shining metals inlaid *in imitation of the heavenly bodies*; and Henry V. wore, on a very memorable occasion, when Prince of Wales, a mantle or gown of rich blue satin, full of small eylet-holes, as thickly as they could be put, and a needle hanging by a silk thread *from every hole*.

The following incident, quoted from Miss Strickland's *Life of Berengaria*, will show the esteem in which a rich, and especially a furred garment was held. Richard I. quarrelled with the virtuous St. Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, on the old ground of exacting a simoniacal tribute on the installation of the

prelate into his see. Willing to evade the direct charge of selling the see, King Richard intimated that a present of a fur mantle worth a thousand marks might be a composition. St. Hugh said he was no judge of such gauds, and therefore sent the king a thousand marks, declaring, if he would devour the revenue devoted to the poor, he must have his wilful way. But as soon as Richard had pocketed the money he sent for the fur mantle. St. Hugh set out for Normandy to remonstrate with the king on this double extortion. His friends anticipated that he would be killed; but St. Hugh said, "I fear him not," and boldly entered the chapel where Richard was at mass, when the following scene took place:—

"Give me the embrace of peace, my son," said St. Hugh.

"That you have not deserved," replied the king.

"Indeed I have," said St. Hugh, "for I have made a long journey on purpose to see my son."

So saying, he took hold of the king's sleeve and drew him on one side. Richard smiled and embraced the old man. They withdrew to the recess behind the altar and sate down.

"In what state is your conscience?" asked the bishop.

"Very easy," said the king.

"How can that be, my son," said the bishop, "when you live apart from your virtuous queen, and are faithless to her; when you devour the provision of the poor, and load your people with heavy exactions? Are those light transgressions, my son?"

The king owned his faults, and promised amendment; and when he related this conversation to his

courtiers he added, "Were all our prelates like Hugh of Lincoln, both king and barons must submit to their righteous rebukes."

Furs were much used now as coverings for beds; and they were considered a *necessary* part of dress for a very considerable period.

In Sir John Cullum's *Hawsted*, mention is made that in 1281 Cecilia, widow of William Talmache, died, and, amongst other bequests, left "to Thomas Battesford, for black coats for poor people, xxxs. in part." "To John Camp, of Bury St. Edmunds, furrier, for furs for the black coats, viijs. xjd." On which the reverend and learned author remarks, "We should now indeed think that a black coat bestowed on a poor person wanted not the addition of fur: such, however, was the fashion of the time; and a sumptuary law of Edward III. allows handicraft and yeomen to wear no manner of furre, nor of bugg,\* but only lambe, coney, catte, and foxe."

The distinction in rank was expressly shown by the kind of fur displayed on the dress, and these distinctions were regulated by law and rigidly enforced. By a statute passed in 1455, for regulating the dress of the Scottish lords of parliament, the gowns of the earls are appointed to be furred with ermine, while those of the other lords are to be lined with "criestay, gray, greece, or purray."

The more precious furs, as ermine and sable, were reserved exclusively for the principal nobility of both sexes. Persons of an inferior rank wore the *vair* or *gris* (probably the Hungarian squirrel); the

\* Bugg—buge, lamb's furr.—Dr. Jamieson.

citizens and burgesses, the common squirrel and lamb skins ; and the peasants, cat and badger skins. The mantles of our kings and peers, and the furred robes of the several classes of our municipal officers, are the remains of this once universal fashion.

Furs often formed an important part of the ransom of a prisoner of rank :—

“ Sir,” quoth Count Bongars, “ war’s disastrous hour  
Hath cast my lot within my foeman’s power.  
Name ransome as you list ; gold, silver bright,  
Palfreys, or dogs, or falcons train’d to flight ;  
Or choose you *sumptuous furs, of vair or gray* ;  
I plight my faith the destin’d price to pay.” \*

Certain German nobles who had slain a bishop were enjoined, amongst other acts of penance, “ ut varium, griseum, ermelinum, et pannos coloratos, non portent.”

The skin of the wild cat was much used by the clergy. Bishop Wolfstan preferred lambskin ; saying in excuse, “ Crede mihi, nunquam audivi, in ecclesia, cantari *catus Dei*, sed *agnus Dei* ; ideo calefieri agno volo.”

The monk of Chaucer had

“ ——— his sleeves purfild, at the hond,  
With gris, and that the finest of the lond.”

It is not till about the year 1204 that there is any specific enumeration of the royal apparel for festival occasions. The proper officers are appointed to bring for the king on this occasion “ a golden crown, a red satin mantle adorned with sapphires and pearls, a robe of the same, a tunic of white damask ; and slippers of red satin edged with goldsmith’s

work; a balbrick set with gems; two girdles enamelled and set with garnets and sapphires; white gloves, one with a sapphire and one with an amethyst; various clasps adorned with emeralds, turquois, pearls, and topaz; and sceptres set with twenty-eight diamonds." \*

So much for the king:—And for the queen—oh! ye enlightened legislators of the earth, ye omnipotent and magisterial lords of creation, look on that picture—and on this.

“For our lady the queen’s use, sixty ells of fine linen cloth, forty ells of dark green cloth, a skin of minever, a *small brass pan*, and *eight towels*.”

But John, who in addition to his other amiable propensities was the greatest and most extravagant fop in Europe, was as parsimonious towards others as selfish and extravagant people usually are. Whilst even at the ceremony of her coronation he only afforded his Queen “three cloaks of fine linen, one of scarlet cloth, and one grey pelisse, costing together 12*l.* 5*s.* 4*d.*,” he himself launched into all sorts of expenditure. He ordered the minutest articles for himself and the queen; but the wardrobe accounts of the sovereigns of the middle ages prove that they kept a royal warehouse of mercery, haberdashery, and linen, from whence their officers measured out velvets, brocades, sarcenets, tissue, gauzes, and trimmings, of all sorts. A queen, says Miss Strickland, had not the satisfaction of ordering her own gown when she obtained leave to have a new one; the warlike hand of her royal lord signed the order for

\* The first instance in which the name of this stone is found.—Miss Lawrence.



the delivery of the materials from his stores, noting down with minute precision the exact quantity to a quarter of a yard of the cloth, velvet, or brocade, of which the garment was composed.

“Blessed be the memory of King Edward III. and Philippa of Hainault his queen, who first invented clothes,” was, we are told, the grateful adjuration of a monkish historian, who referred probably not to the first assumption of apparel, but to the charter which was granted first by that monarch to the “cutters and linen armourers,” subsequently known as the merchant-tailors, who at that period were usually the makers of all garments, silk, linen, or woollen. Female fingers had sufficient occupation in the finer parts of the work; in the “silke broiderie” with which every garment of fashion was embellished; in the tapestry; in the spinning of wool and flax, every thread of which was drawn by female hands, and in the weaving of which a great portion was also executed by them.

In the forty-fourth year of this king, “as the book of Worcester reporteth, they began to use cappes of divers coloures, especially red, with costly lynings; and in the year 1372, the forty-seventh of the above prince, they first began to wanton it in a new round curtall weede, which they call a cloake, and in Latin *armilausea*, as only covering the shoulders, and this notwithstanding the king had endeavoured to restrain all these inordinances and expenses in clothing; as appears by the law by Parliament established in the thirty-sixth year of his reign. All ornaments of gold or silver, either on the daggers, girdles, necklaces, rings, or other ornaments for the

body, were forbid to all that could not spend ten pounds a-year; and farther, that no furre or pretious and costly apparel, should be worne by any but men possessed of 100*l.* a year."

Besides the rigid enactments of the law, and the anathemas of divines, other and gentler means were from time to time resorted to as warnings from that sin of dress which seems inherent in our nature, or as inducements to a more becoming one. We quote a specimen of both:—

"There was a lady whiche had her lodgyng by the chirche, And she was alweye accustomed for to be longe to araye her, and to make her freshe and gay, insomuch that it annoyed and greued moche the parson of the chirche, and the parysshens. And it happed on a Sondag that she was so longe, that she sent to the preeste that he shod tarye for her, lyke as she had been accustomed. And it was thenne ferforthe on the day. And it annoyed the peple. And there were somme that said, How is hit? shall not this lady this day be pynned ne wel besene in a Myrroure? And somme said softly, God sende to her an evyll syght in her myrroure that causeth us this day and so oftymes to muse and to abyde for her. And thene as it plesyd God for an ensample, as she loked in the myrroure she sawe therein the Fende, whiche shewed hymselfe to her so fowle and horryble, that the lady wente oute of her wytte, and was al demonyak a long tyme. And after God sente to her helthe. And after she was not so longe in arayeng but thanked God that had so suffered her to be chastysed."\*

\* The Knyght of the Toure.

The 'Garment of Gude Ladyis' is a lecture of a most beguiling kind, and an exquisite picture.

"Wald my gud lady lufe me best,  
And wirk after my will,  
I suld ane garment gudliest  
ar mak hir body till.

Of he honour suld be her hud,  
Upoun hir heid to weir,  
Garneist with governance so gud,  
Na demyng \* suld hir deir.†

"Hir kirtill suld be of clene constance,  
Lasit with lesum lufe,  
The mailyeis ‡ of continwance  
For nevir to remufe.

"Her gown suld be of gudliness,  
Weill ribband with renowne,  
Purfillit § with plesour in ilk place,  
Furrit with fyne fassoun.||

"Her belt suld be of benignitie,  
About hir middill meit;  
Hir mantill of humilitie,  
To tholl ¶ bayth wind and weit.

"His hat suld be of fair having\*\*,  
And her tepat of trewth,  
Hir patelet †† of gude pansing,  
Hir hals-ribbane of rewth.

"Hir slevis suld be of esperance,  
To keip hir fra despair;  
Hir gluvis of the gud govirnance,  
To hyd hir fingearis fair.

\* *Demyng*—censure.

† *Mailyeis*—network.

|| *Fassoun*—address, politeness.

\*\* *Having*—behaviour.

† *Deir*—dismay.

§ *Purfillit*—furbelowed.

¶ *Tholl*—endure.

†† *Patelet*—run.

“ Hir schone suld be of sickernes \*

In syne that scho nocht slyd ;  
Hir hois of honestie, I ges,  
I suld for hir provyd.

“ Wald scho put on this garmond gay,

I durst sweir by my seill,  
That scho woir nevir grene nor gray  
That set hir half so weill.”

\* *Sickernes*—steadfastness.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## NEEDLEWORK IN COSTUME.—PART II.

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“ And the short French breeches make such a comelie vesture that, except it were a dog in a doublet, you shall not see anie so disguised as are my councitriemen of England.”—HOLINSHED.

“ Out from the Gadis to the eastern morne,  
 Not one but holds his native state forlorne.  
 When comelie striplings wish it were their chance  
 For Cenis’ distaffe to exchange their lance;  
 And weare curl’d periwigs, and chalk their face,  
 And still are poring on their pocket glasse;  
 Tyr’d with pinn’d ruffs, and fans, and partlet strips,  
 And buskes and verdingales about their hips:  
 And tread on corked stilts a prisoner’s pace.”

BP. JOSEPH HALL.

“ They brought in fashions strange and new,  
 With golden garments bright;  
 The farthingale and mighty ruff,  
 With gowns of rich delight.”

A WARNING-PIECE TO ENGLAND.

THE queen (Anne Neville) of Richard III. seems to have been somewhat more regally accoutred than those of her royal predecessors to whom we referred in the last chapter. Among “ the stuff delivered to the queen at her coronation are twenty-seven yards of white cloth of gold for a kirtle and train, and a



mantle of the same, richly furred with ermine. This was the dress in which she rode in her litter from the Tower to the palace of Westminster. This was an age of long trains, and the length was regulated by the rank of the wearer; Anne, for her whole purple velvet suit, had fifty-six yards. From the entries of scarlet cloth given to the nobility for mantles on this occasion, we find that duchesses had thirteen yards, countesses ten, and baronesses eight."

The costume of Henry VII.'s day differed little from that of Edward IV., except in the use of shirts bordered with lace and richly trimmed with ornamental needlework, which continued a long time in vogue amongst the nobility and gentry.

A slight inspection of the inventories of Henry VIII.'s apparel will convince us of a truth which we should otherwise, readily have guessed, viz., that no expense and no splendour were spared in the "swashing costume" of his day. Its general aspect is too familiar to us to require much comment. We may remark, however, that four several acts were passed in his reign for the reformation of apparel, and that all but the royal family were prohibited from wearing "any cloth of gold of purple colour, or silk of the same colour," upon pain of forfeiture of the same and £20 for every offence. Shirt bands and ruffles of gold were worn by the privileged, but none under the degree of knight were permitted to decorate their shirts with silk, gold, or silver. Henry VIII.'s "knitte gloves of silk" are particularly referred to, and also his "handkerchers" edged with gold, silver, or fine needlework. These handkerchiefs, wrought with gold and silver, were not uncommon in the

after-times. In the ballad of George Barnwell, it is said of Milwood—

“ A handkerchief she had,  
All wrought with silk and gold,  
Which she, to stay her trickling tears,  
Before her eyes did hold.”

In the east these handkerchiefs are common, and it is still a favourite occupation of the Egyptian ladies to embroider them.

We are surprised now to find to what minute particulars legal enactments descended. “No husbandman, shepherd, or common labourer to any artificer, out of cities or boroughs (having no goods of their own above the value of £10), shall use or wear any cloth the broad yard whereof passeth 2*s.* 4*d.*, or any hose above the price of 12*d.* the yard, upon pain of imprisonment in the stocks for three days.”

It was in a subsequent reign, that of Mary, that a proclamation was issued that no man should “weare his shoes above sixe inches *square* at the toes.” We have before seen that the attention of the grave and learned members of the Senate, the “Conscript Fathers” of England, was devoted to the due regulation of this interesting part of apparel, when the shoe-toes were worn so long that they were obliged to be tied up to the waist ere the happy and privileged wearer could set his foot on the ground. Now, however, “a change came o’er the spirit of the” day, and it became the duty of those who exercised a paternal surveillance over the welfare of the community at large to legislate regarding the *breadth* of the shoe-toes, that they should not be above “sixe inches square.”

“Great,” was anciently the cry—“Great is Diana of

the Ephesians ; ” but how immeasurably greater and mightier has been, through that and all succeeding ages, the supreme potentate who with a mesh of flimsy gauze or fragile silk has constrained nations as by a shackle of iron, that shadowy, unsubstantial, ever-fleeting, yet ever-exacting deity—FASHION ! At her shrine worship all the nations of the earth. The savage who bores his nose or tattoos his tawny skin is impelled by the same power which robes the courtly Eastern in flowing garments ; and the dark-hued beauty who smears herself with blubber is influenced by the selfsame motive which causes the fair-haired daughter of England to tint her delicate cheek with the mimic rose.

And it is not merely in the shape and form of garments that this deity exercises her tyrannic sway, transforming “ men into monsters,” and women likewise—if it were possible : her vagaries are infinite and unaccountable ; yet, how unaccountable soever, have ever numberless and willing votaries. It was once the *fashion* for people who either were or fancied themselves to be in love to prove the sincerity of their passion by the fortitude with which they could bear those extremes of heat and cold from which unsophisticated *nature* would shrink. These “ penitents of love,” for so the fraternity—and a pretty numerous one it was—was called, would clothe themselves in the dog-days in the thickest mantles lined throughout with the warmest fur : when the winds howled, the hail beat, and snow invested the earth with a freezing mantle, they wore the thinnest and most fragile garments. It was forbidden to wear fur on a day of the most piercing cold, or to appear with a hood, cloak, gloves, or muff. They

supposed or pretended that the deity whom they thus propitiated was LOVE : we aver that the autocrat under whose irreversible decrees they thus succumbed—was FASHION.

And, after all, who is this all-powerful genius? What is her appearance? Whence does she arise? Did she alight from the skies, while rejoicing stars sang Pæans at her birth? Was she born of the Sunbeams while a glittering Rainbow cast a halo of glory around her? or did she spring from Ocean while Nereids revelled around, and Mermaids strung their Harps with their own golden locks, soft melodies the while floating along the glistening waves, and echoing from the Tritons' booming shells beneath? No. Alas, no! She is subtle as the air; she is evanescent as a sunbeam, and unsubstantial as the ocean's froth;—but she is none of these. She is—but we will lay aside our own definition in order that the reader may have the advantage of that of one of the greatest and wisest of statesmen.

“*Quelqu'un qui voudrait un peu étudier d'où part en première source ce qu'on appelle LES MODES verrait, à notre honte, qu'un petit nombre de gens, de la plus méprisable espèce qui soit dans une ville, laquelle renferme tout indifféremment dans son sein; pour qui, si nous les connaissions, nous n'aurions que le mépris qu'on a pour les gens sans mœurs, ou la pitié qu'on a pour les fous, disposent pourtant de nos bourses, et nous tiennent assujettis à tous leurs caprices.*”

Can this indeed be that supereminent deity for whom so “many do shipwreck their credits,” and make themselves “ridiculous apes, or at best but

like the cynamon-tree, whose bark is more worth than its body."

"Clothes" writes a venerable historian, "are for necessity; warm clothes for health; cleanly for decency; lasting for thrift; and rich for magnificence. Now, there may be a fault in their number, if too various; making, if too vain; matter, if too costly; and mind of the wearer, if he takes pride therein.

*"He that is proud of the russling of his silks, like a madman laughs at the rattling of his fetters. For indeed, clothes ought to be our remembrancers of our lost innocency. Besides, why should any brag of what's but borrowed? Should the Estrige snatch off the Gallant's feather, the Beaver his hat, the Goat his gloves, the Sheep his sute, the Silkworm his stockings, and Neat his shoes (to strip him no farther than modesty will give leave), he would be left in a cold condition. And yet 'tis more pardonable to be proud, even of cleanly rags, than (as many are) of affected slovenness. The one is proud of a mole-hill, the other of a dunghill."*

But the worthy Fuller's ideal picture of suitable dress was the very antipodes of the reality of Elizabeth's day, when that rage for foreign fashions existed which has since frequently almost inundated the island, and our ancestors masked themselves

" ——— in garish gaudery  
To suit a fool's far-fetched livery.  
A French hood join'd to neck Italian,  
The thighs from Germany and breast from Spain.  
An Englishman in none, a fool in all,  
Many in one, and one in several."



And Shakspeare, who has perhaps suffered no peculiarity of his time to escape observation, makes Portia satirize this affectation in her English admirer:—"How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere."

A reverend critic thus remarks on the luxurious modes of his time: "These tender Parnels must have one gown for the day, another for the night; one long, another short; one for winter, another for summer. One furred through, another but faced; one for the workday, another for the holiday. One of this colour, another of that. One of cloth, another of silk or damask. Change of apparel; one afore dinner, another at after: one of Spanish fashion, another of Turkey. And to be brief, never content with enough, but always devising new fashions and strange. Yea, a ruffian will have more in his ruff and his hose than he should spend in a year. He which ought to go in a russet coat spends as much on apparel for him and his wife as his father would have kept a good house with."

The following is of later date, and seems, somewhat unjustly we think, to satirize the fair sex alone.

"Why do women array themselves in such fantastical dresses and quaint devices; with gold, with silver, with coronets, with pendants, bracelets, earrings, chains, rings, pins, spangles, embroideries, shadows, rebatoes, versicoloured ribbons, feathers, fans, masks, furs, laces, tiffanies, ruffs, falls, calls, cuffs, damasks, velvets, tassels, golden cloth, silver

tissue, precious stones, stars, flowers, birds, beasts, fishes, crisped locks, wigs, painted faces, bodkins, setting sticks, cork, whalebone, sweet odours, and whatever else Africa, Asia, and America can produce; flaying their faces to produce the fresher complexion of a new skin, and using more time in dressing than Cæsar took in marshelling his army,—but that, like cunning falconers, they wish to spread false lures to catch unwary larks, and lead by their gaudy baits and dazzling charms the minds of inexperienced youth into the traps of love?”

Though the costume of Elizabeth's day, especially at the period of her coronation was, splendid, it had not attained to the ridiculous extravagance which at a later period elicited the above-quoted strictures; and we are told that her own taste at an early period of life was simple and unostentatious. Her dress and appearance are thus described by Aylmer, Lady Jane Grey's tutor, and afterwards Bishop of London.

“The king (Henry VIII.) left her rich clothes and jewels; and I know it to be true, that, in seven years after her father's death, she never in all that time looked upon that rich attire and precious jewels but once, and that against her will. And that there never came gold or stone upon her head, till her sister forced her to lay off her former soberness, and bear her company in her glittering gayness. And then she so wore it as every man might see that her body carried that which her heart disliked. I am sure that her maidenly apparel, which she used in King Edward's time, made noblemen's daughters and wives to be ashamed to be dressed

and painted like peacocks ; being more moved with her most virtuous example than with all that ever Paul or Peter wrote touching that matter. Yea, this I know, that a great man's daughter (Lady Jane Grey) receiving from Lady Mary, before she was queen, good apparel of tinsel, cloth of gold and velvet, laid on with parchment-lace of gold, when she saw it, said, 'What shall I do with it?' 'Marry!' said a gentlewoman, 'wear it.' 'Nay,' quoth she, 'that were a shame, to follow my Lady Mary against God's Word, and leave my Lady Elizabeth, which followeth God's Word.' And when all the ladies, at the coming of the Scots' Queen Dowager, Mary of Guise, (she who visited England in Edward's time), went with their hair frowned, curled, and double-curled, she altered nothing, but kept her old maidenly shame-facedness."

And there is a print from a portrait of her when young, in which the hair is without a single ornament, and the whole dress remarkably simple.

Yet this is the lady whose passion for dress in after life could not be sated ; to whom, or at least before whom (and the Queen was not slow in appropriating and resenting the hint\*), Latimer, Bishop of London, thought it necessary to preach on the vanity of decking the body too finely ; and who finally left behind her a wardrobe containing three thousand dresses. A modern fair one may wonder how such a profusion of dresses could be

\* "Her Majesty told the ladies, that if the Bishop held more discourse on such matters, she would fit him for heaven ; but he should walk thither without a staff and leave his mantle behind him."

accommodated at all, even in a royal wardrobe, with fitting respect to the integrity of puffs and furbelows. But clothes were not formerly kept in drawers, where but few can be laid with due regard to the safety of each, but were hung up on wooden pegs, in a room appropriated to the sole purpose of receiving them; and though such cast-off things as were composed of rich substances were occasionally *ripped* for domestic uses (viz., mantles for infants, vests for children, and counterpanes for beds), articles of inferior quality were suffered to *hang by the walls* till age and moths had destroyed what pride would not permit to be worn by servants or poor relations. To this practice, also, does Shakspeare allude: Imogen exclaims, in ‘Cymbeline,’—

“Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;  
And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,  
I must be ripp’d—”

The following regulations may be interesting; and the knowledge of them will doubtless excite feelings of joy and gratitude in our fair readers that they are born in an age where “will is free,” and the dustman’s wife may, if it so please her, outshine the duchess, without the terrors of Parliament before her eyes:—

“By the Queene.

“Whereas the Queene’s Maiestie, for avoyding of the great inconvenience that hath growen and dayly doeth increase within this her Realme, by the inordinate excesse in Apparel, hath in her Princely wisdom and care for reformation thereof, by sundry

former Proclamations, straightly charged and commanded those in Authoritie under her to see her Lawes provided in that behalfe duely executed; Whereof notwithstanding, partly through their negligence, and partly by the manifest contempt and disobedience of the parties offending, no reformation at all hath followed; Her Maiestie, finding by experience that by Clemencie, whereunto she is most inclinable, so long as there is any hope of redresse, this increasing evill hath not beene cured, hath thought fit to seeke to remedie the same by correction and severitie, to be used against both these kindes of offenders, in regard of the present difficulties of this time; wherein the decay and lacke of hospitalitie appears in the better sort in all countreys, principally occasioned by the immeasurable charges and expenses which they are put to in superfluous apparelling their wives, children, and families, the confusion also of degrees in all places being great; where the meanest are as richly apparelled as their betters, and the pride that such inferior persons take in their garments, driving many for their maintenance to robbing and stealing by the hieway, &c. &c.

“Her Maiestie doth straightly charge and command—

“That none under the degree of a Countess wear :  
Cloth of gold or silver tissued ;  
Silke of coulour purple.

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“Under the degree of a Baronesse :—  
Cloth of golde ;  
Cloth of silver ;  
Tinselled satten ;



Sattens branched with silver or golde ;  
 Sattens striped with silver or golde ;  
 Taffaties brancht with silver or golde ;  
 Cipresses flourisht with silver or golde ;  
 Networks wrought in silver or golde ;  
 Tabines brancht with silver or golde ;  
 Or any other silke or cloth mixt or embroidered  
 with pearle, golde, or silver.

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“ Under the degree of a Baron’s eldest sonne’s wife :  
 Any embroideries of golde or silver ;  
 Passemaine lace, or any other lace, mixed with  
 golde, silver, or silke ;  
 Caules, attires, or other garnishings for the head  
 trimmed with pearle.

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Under the degree of a Knighte’s wife :—  
 Velvet in gownes, cloakes, saveguards, or other  
 uppermost garments ;  
 Embroidery with silke.

---

“ Under the degree of a Knighte’s eldest sonne’s  
 wife :—  
 Velvet in kirtles and petticoates ;  
 Sattens in gownes, cloakes, saveguards, or other  
 uppermost garments.

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“ Under the degree of a Gentleman’s wife, bearing  
 armes :—  
 Satten in kirtles, }  
 Damaske, }  
 Tuft taffetie, } in gownes.  
 Plaine taffetie, }  
 Grograine }

Venice and Paris seem to have been the chief sources of fashion ; from these depôts of taste were derived the flaunting head dresses, the “ shiptire,” the “ tire valiant,” &c., which were commonly worn in these days of gorgeous finery, and which were rendered still more *outré* and unnatural by the *dyed* locks which they surmounted. The custom of dyeing the hair is of great antiquity, and was very prevalent in the East. Mohammed dyed his hair red ; Abu Bekr his successor did the same, and it is a custom among the Scenite Arabs even to this day.

The ancients often mixed gold dust in their hair, and the Gauls used to wash the hair with a liquid which had a tendency to redden it. It was doubtless in personal compliment to Queen Elizabeth, that all the fashionables of her day dyed their locks of a hue which is generally considered the reverse of attraction. Periwigs, which were introduced into England about 1572, were to be had of *all colours*. It is in allusion to this absurd fashion that Benedick says of the lady whom he might chuse to marry :—“ Her hair shall be of what colour it please God.”

Men first wore wigs in Charles the Second’s time ; and these were gradually increased in size, until they reached the acme of their magnificence in the reign of William and Mary, when not only men, but even young lads and children were disguised in enormous wigs. And though in the reign of Queen Anne this latter custom was not so common, yet the young men had the want of wigs supplied by artificial curlings, and dressing of the hair, which was then only performed by the women.

One Bill preserved amongst the Harl. MSS. runs thus:—

“ Next door to the Golden Ball, in St. Bride’s Lane, Fleet Street, Lyveth Lidia Beercraft. Who cutteth and curleth ladies, gentlemen, and children’s hair. She sells a fine pomatum, which is mixed with ingredients of her own making, that if the hair be never so thin, it makes it grow thick; and if short, it makes it grow long. If any gentleman’s or children’s hair be never so lank, she makes it curle in a little time, and to look like a periwig.”

And this, indeed, the looking like a periwig, seems to have been then the very *beau ideal* of all beauty and perfection, for another fair tonsoreess advertises to cut and curl hair after the French fashion, “after so fine a manner, that *you shall not know it to be their own hair.*”

How applicable to these absurdities are the lines of an amiable censor of a later day!—

“ We have run  
Through ev’ry change, that Fancy, at the loom  
Exhausted, has had genius to supply;  
And, studious of mutation still, discard  
A real elegance, a little us’d,  
For mons’trous novelty and strange disguise.”

To return to Elizabeth:—

The best known, and most distinguishing characteristic of the costume of her day was the ruff; which was worn of such enormous size that a lady in full dress was obliged to feed herself with a spoon two feet long. In the year 1580, sumptuary laws were pub-

lished by proclamation, and enforced with great exactness, by which the ruffs were reduced to legal dimensions. Extravagant prices were paid for them, and they were made at first of fine holland, but early in Elizabeth's reign they began to wear lawn and cambric, which were brought to England in very small quantities, and sold charily by the yard or half yard ; for there was then hardly one shopkeeper in fifty who dared to speculate in a whole piece of either. So "strange and wonderful was this stuff," says Stowe, speaking of lawn, "that thereupon rose a general scoff or byeword, that shortly they would wear ruffs of a spider's web." And another difficulty arose ; for when the Queen had ruffs made of this new and beautiful fabric, there was nobody in England who could starch or stiffen them ; but happily Her Grace found a Dutchwoman possessed of that knowledge which England could not supply, and "Guillan's wife was the first starcher the Queen had, as Guillan himself was the first coachman."

"Afterward, in 1564, (16th of Elizabeth), one Mistress Dinghen Vauden Plasse, born at Teenen in Flanders, daughter of a worshipful knight of that province, with her husband, came to London, and there professed herself a starcher, wherein she excelled ; unto whom her own nation presently repaired and employed her, rewarding her very liberally for her work. Some of the curious ladies of that time, observing the neatness of the Dutch, and the nicety of their linen, made them cambric ruffs, and sent them to Mistress Dinghen to starch ; soon after they began to send their daughters and kinswomen to Mistress Dinghen, to learn how to starch ; her usual

price was, at that time, 4*l.* or 5*l.* to teach them to starch, and 20*s.* to learn them to see the starch. This Mrs. Dinghen was the first that ever taught starching in England."

The RUFFS were adjusted by poking sticks of iron, steel, or silver, heated in the fire—(probably something answering to our Italian iron), and in May 1582 a lady of Antwerp, being invited to a wedding, could not, although she employed two celebrated laundresses, get her ruff plaited according to her taste, upon which "she fell to sweare and teare, to curse and ban, casting the ruffles under feete, and wishing that the devill might take her when shee did wear any neckerchers againe." This gentleman, whom it is said an invocation will always summon, now appeared in the likeness of a favoured suitor, and inquiring the cause of her agitation, he "took in hande the setting of her ruffles, which he performed to her great contentation and liking; insomuch, as she, looking herself in a glasse (as the devill bade her) became greatly enamoured with him. This done, the young man kissed her, in the doing whereof, he writhed her neck in sunder, so she died miserably."

But here comes the marvel: four men tried in vain to lift her "fearful body" when confined for interment; six were equally unsuccessful; "whereat the standers-by marvelling, caused the coffin to be opened to see the cause thereof: where they found the body to be taken away, and a blacke catte, very leane and deformed, sitting in the coffin, *setting of great ruffles and frizling of haire*, to the great feare and woonder of all the beholders."



The large hoop farthingales were worn now, but they were said to be adopted by the ladies from a laudable spirit of emulation, a praiseworthy desire on their parts to be of equal standing with the “nobler sex,” who now wore breeches, stuffed with rags or other materials to such an enormous size, that a bench of extraordinary dimension was placed round the parliament house, (of which the traces were visible at a very late period) solely for their accommodation.

Strutt quotes an instance of a man whom the judges accused of wearing breeches contrary to the law (for a law was made against them): he, for his excuse, drew out of his slops the contents; at first a pair of sheets, two table-cloths, ten napkins, four shirts, a brush, a glass, and a comb; with nightcaps and other things of use, saying, “Your worship may understand, that because I have no safer a store-house, these pockets do serve me for a room to lay up my goods in,—and, though it be a strait prison, yet it is big enough for them, for I have man things of value yet within it.” His excuse was heartily laughed at and accepted.

This ridiculous fashion was for a short time disused, but revived again in 1614. The breeches were then chiefly stuffed with hair. Many satirical rhymes were written upon them; amongst others, “A lamentable complaint of the poore Countrye Men agaynst great hose, for the loss of their cattelles tales.” In which occur these:—

“What hurt, what damage doth ensue,  
And fall upon the poore,  
For want of wool and flaxe, of late,  
Whych monstrous hose devoure.

“ But haire hath so possess'd, of late,  
The bryche of every knave,  
That no one beast, nor horse can tell,  
Whiche way his taile to save.”

Henry VIII. had received a few pairs of silk stockings from Spain, but knitted silk ones were not known until the second year of Elizabeth, when her silk-woman, Mrs. Montague, presented to Her Majesty a pair of black knit silk stockings, for a new-year's gift, with which she was so much pleased that she desired to know if the donor could not help her to any more, to which Mrs. Montague answered, “I made them carefully on purpose for your Majestie; and seeing they please you so well, I will presently set more in hand.” “Do so (said the Queen), for I like silk stockings so well, that I will not henceforth wear any more cloth hose.” These shortly became common; though even over so simple an article as a stocking, Fashion asserted her supremacy, and at a subsequent period they were two yards wide at the top, and made fast to the “petticoat breeches,” by means of strings through eyelet holes.

But Elizabeth's predilection for rich attire is well known, and if the costume of her day was fantastic, it was still magnificent. A suit trimmed with sables was considered the richest dress worn by men; and so expensive was this fur, that, it is said a thousand ducats were sometimes given for “a face of sables.” It was towards the close of her reign that the celebrated Gabrielle d'Estrées wore on a festive occasion a dress of black satin, so ornamented with

pearls and precious stones, that she could scarcely move under its weight. She had a handkerchief, for the embroidering of which she engaged to pay 1900 crowns. And such it was said was the influence of her example in Paris, that the ladies ornamented even their shoes with jewels.

Yet even this costly magnificence was afterwards surpassed by that of Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, with whom it was common, even at an ordinary dancing, to have his clothes trimmed with great diamond buttons, and to have diamond hatbands, cockades, and earrings, to be yoked with great and manifold ropes and knots of pearl; in short, to be manacled, fettered, and imprisoned in jewels: inso-much that at his going to Paris in 1625, he had twenty-seven suits of clothes made, the richest that embroidery, lace, silk, velvet, gold, and gems could contribute; one of which was a white uncut velvet set all over, both suit and cloak, with diamonds valued at fourscore thousand pounds, besides a great feather, stuck all over with diamonds, as were also his sword, girdle, hatband, and spurs.\*

It would but weary our readers were we to dwell on the well-known peculiarities of the "Cavalier and Roundhead" days; and tell how the steeple-crowned hat was replaced at the Restoration by the plumed and jewelled velvet; the forlorn, smooth, methodistical pate, by the curled ringlets and flowing lovelock; the sober, sombre, "sad" coloured garment, with its starched folds, by the gay, varied, flowing drapery of all hues. Then, how the plume

\* Life of Raleigh, by Oldys.

of feathers gave way to the simpler band and buckle, and the thick large curling wig and full ruffle, to the bagwig, the tie, and stock.

The dashing cloak and slashed sleeves were succeeded by the coat of ample dimensions, and the waistcoat with interminable pockets resting on the knees; the "breeches" were in universal use, though they were not of the universal "black" which Cowper immortalises; but "black breeches" and "powder" have had their reign, and are succeeded by the "inexpressible" costume of the present day. We will conclude a chapter, which we fear to have spun out tediously, by Lady Morgan's animated account of the introduction, in France, of that universally-coveted article of dress—a Cashmir shawl:—

"While partaking of a sumptuous collation (at Rouen), the conversation naturally turned on the splendid views which the windows commanded, and on the subjects connected with their existence. The flocks, which were grazing before us had furnished the beautiful shawls which hung on the backs of the chairs occupied by our fair companions, and which might compete with the turbans of the Grand Signor. It would be difficult now to persuade a Parisian *petite maitresse* that there was a time when French women of fashion could exist without a cashmir, or that such an indispensable article of the toilet and *sultan* was unknown even to the most elegant. 'The first cashemir that appeared in France,' said Madame D'Aubespine, (for an educated French woman has always something worth hearing to say on all subjects,) 'was sent over by

Baron de Tott, then in the service of the Porte, to Madame de Tessé. When they were produced in her society, every body thought them very fine, but nobody knew what use to make of them. It was determined that they would make pretty *couvre-pieds* and veils for the cradle; but the fashion wore out with the shawls, and ladies returned to their eider-down quilts.'

"Monsieur Ternaux observed that 'though the produce of the Cashmerian looms had long been known in Europe, they did not become a vogue until after Napoleon's expedition to Egypt; and that even then they took, in the first instance, but slowly.' The shawl was still a novelty in France, when Josephine, as yet but the wife of the First Consul, knew not how to drape its elegant folds, and stood indebted to the *brusque* Rapp for the grace with which she afterwards wore it.

" 'Permettez que je vous fasse l'observation,' said Rapp, as they were setting off for the opera; 'que votre schall n'est pas mis avec cette grace qui vous est habituelle.'

"Josephine laughingly let him arrange it in the manner of the Egyptian women. This impromptu toilette caused a little delay, and the infernal machine exploded in vain!

"What destinies waited upon the arrangement of this cashemir! A moment sooner or later, and the shawl might have given another course to events, which would have changed the whole face of Europe." \*

\* Lady Morgan's France in 1829-30.



The Empress Josephine (says her biographer) had quite a passion for shawls, and I question whether any collection of them was ever as valuable as hers. At Navarre she had one hundred and fifty, all extremely beautiful and high-priced. She sent designs to Constantinople, and the shawls made after these patterns were as beautiful as they were valuable. Every week M. Lenormant came to Navarre, and sold her whatever he could obtain that was curious in this way. I have seen white shawls covered with roses, bluebells, perroquets, peacocks, &c., which I believe were not to be met with any where else in Europe; they were valued at 15,000 and 20,000 francs each.

The shawls were at length sold *by auction* at Malmaison, at a rate much below their value. All Paris went to the sale.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD.

- 
- “ Where are the proud and lofty dames,  
 Their jewell’d crowns, their gay attire,  
 Their odours sweet ?  
 Where are the love-enkindled flames,  
 The bursts of passionate desire  
 Laid at their feet ?  
 Where are the songs, the troubadours,  
 The music which delighted then ?—  
 It speaks no more.  
 Where is the dance that shook the floors,  
 And all the gay and laughing train,  
 And all they wore ?
- “ The royal gifts profusely shed,  
 The palaces so proudly built,  
 With riches stor’d ;  
 The roof with shining gold o’erspread,  
 The services of silver gilt,  
 The secret hoard,  
 The Arabian pards, the harness bright,  
 The bending plumes, the crowded mews,  
 The lacquey train,  
 Where are they ?—where !—all lost in night,  
 And scatter’d as the early dews  
 Across the plain.”

BOWRING’S ANC. SPAN. ROMANCES.

ROMANCE and song have united to celebrate the splendours of the “ Field of the Cloth of Gold.”

The most scrupulously minute and faithful of recorders has detailed day by day, and point by point, its varied and showy routine, and every subsequent historian has borrowed from the pages of the old chronicler; and these dry details have been so expanded by the breath of Fancy, and his skeleton frame has been so fleshed by the magical drapery of talent, that there seems little left on which the imagination can dilate, or the pen expatiate.

The astonishing impulse which has in various ways within the last few years been given to the searching of ancient records, and the development of hitherto obscure and comparatively uninteresting details, and vesting them in an alluring garb, has made us as familiar with the domestic records of the eighth Henry, as in our school-days we were with the orthodox abstract of necessary historical information,—that “Henry the Eighth ascended the throne in the 18th year of his age;” that “he became extremely corpulent;” that “he married six wives, and beheaded two.” Not even affording gratuitously the codicil which the talent of some writer hath eduved—that “if Henry the Eighth had not beheaded his wives, there would have been no impeachment on his gallantry to the fair sex.”

But in describing this, according to some, “the most magnificent spectacle that Europe ever beheld,” and to others, “a heavy mass of allegory and frippery,” historians have been contented to pourtray the outward features of the gorgeous scene, and have slightly, if at all, touched on the contending feelings which were veiled beneath a broad though thin surface of concord and joy. Truly, it were a

task of deep interest, even slightly to picture them, or to attempt to enter into the feelings of the chief actors on that field.

First and foremost, as the guiding spirit of the whole, as the mighty artificer of that pageant on which, however gaudy in its particulars the fates of Europe were supposed to depend, and the earnest eyes of Europe were certainly fixed—comes WOLSEY.—Gorgeously habited himself, and the burnished gold of his saddle cloth only partially relieved by the more sombre crimson velvet; nay, his very shoes gleaming with brilliants, and himself withal so lofty in bearing, of so noble a presence, that this very magnificence seemed but a natural appendage, Wolsey took his lofty way from monarch to monarch; and so well did he become his dignity, that none but kings, and such kings as Henry and Francis, would have drawn the eyes of the myriad spectators from himself. And surely he was now happy; surely his ambition was now gratified to the uttermost; now, in the eyes of all Europe did the two proudest of her princes not merely associate with him almost as an equal, but openly yield to his suggestions—almost bow to his decisions. No—loftily as he bore himself, courtly as was his demeanour, rapid and commanding as was his eloquence, and influential as seemed his opinions on all and every one around—the cardinal had a mind ill at ease, as, despite his self-control, was occasionally testified by his contracted brow and thoughtful aspect. After exerting all the might of his mighty influence, and for his own aggrandisement, to procure this meeting between the two potentates, he

had at the last moment seen fit to alter his policy. He had sold himself to a higher bidder; he had pledged himself to Charles in the very teeth of his solemn engagement to Francis. Even whilst celebrating this league of amity, he was turning in his own mind the means by which to rupture it; and was yet withal, nervously fearful of any accident which should prematurely break it, or lead to a discovery of his own faithlessness.—So much for his enjoyment!

Our KING HENRY was all delight, and eager impetuous enjoyment. He had not outlived the good promise of his youth; nor had his foibles become, by indulgence, vices. He loved to see all around him happy; he loved, more especially, to make them so. He delighted in all the exercises of the field; he was unrivalled in the tilt and the tournament; and when engaged in them forgot kings and kingdoms. His vanity, outrageous as it was, hardly sat ungracefully on him, so much was it elevated then by bouyant good humour—so much was it softened at that time by his noble presence, his manly grace, his kingly accomplishments, and his regal munificence. The stern and selfish tyrant whom one shudders to think upon, was then only “bluff King Hal,” loving and beloved, courted and caressed by an empire. He gave himself up to the gaieties of the time without a care for the present, a thought for the future. Could he have glanced dimly into that future! But he could not, and he was happy.

FRANCIS was admirably qualified to grace this scene, and to enjoy it, as probably he did enjoy it, vividly. Yet was this gratification by no means un-



alloyed. His gentle manly nature was irritated at certain stipulations of Henry's advisers, by which their most trivial intercourse was subjected to specific regulations. There were recorded instances enough of treacherous advantages taken to justify fully this conduct on the part of Henry's ministers ; but Francis felt its injustice, as applied to himself, and at that time, made use of a generous and well-known stratagem to convince others. But in the midst of his enjoyments he had misgivings on his mind of a more serious nature, caused by the Emperor's recent visit to Dover. These misgivings were increased by the meeting between Henry and Charles at Gravelines ; and too surely confirmed by quickly-following circumstances.

The gentle and good KATHARINE of England, and the equally amiable Queen CLAUDE, the carefully-trained stepdaughter of the noble and admirable Anne of Bretagne, probably derived their chief gratification here from the pleasure of seeing their husbands amicable and happy. For queens though they were, their happiness was in domestic life, and their chief empire was over the hearts of those domesticated with them.

Not so the DOWAGER QUEEN of France—the lively, and graceful, and beautiful Duchess of Suffolk ; for though very fond of her royal brother, and devoted to her gallant husband, she had yet an eye and an ear for all the revelries around, and had a radiant glance and a beaming smile for all who crowded to do homage to her charms. And yet her heart must have been somewhat hard—and that we know it was not—if she could have inhaled the air of France, or

trod its sunny soil, without recollections which must have dimmed her eye at the thoughts of the past, even whilst breathing a thanksgiving for the present. Somewhat less than five years ago, she had been taken thither a weeping bride; youth, nature, inclination, nay, hope itself, sacrificed to that expediency by which the actions of monarchs are regulated. We are accustomed to read these things so much as mere historical memoranda, to look upon them in their cold unvarnished simplicity of detail, like the rigid outlines of stiff old portraits which we can scarcely suppose were ever meant to represent living flesh and blood—that it requires a strong effort to picture these circumstances to our eyes as actually occurring.

In considering the state policy of the thing—and the apparent national advantage of the King of England's sister being married to the King of France—we forget that this King of England's sister was a fair young creature, with warm heart, gushing affections, and passions and feelings just opening in all the vividness of early womanhood; and that she was condemned to marry a sickly, querulous, elderly man, who began his loving rule by dismissing at once, even while she was “a stranger in a foreign land,” every endeared friend and attendant who had accompanied her thither; and that, worse than all, her young affections had been sought and gained by a noble English gentleman, the favourite of the English king, and the pride of his Court.

Surely her lot was hard; and well might she weepingly exclaim, “Where is now my hope?”

Little could she suppose (for Louis, though infirm, was not aged) that three or four short months would see her not only at liberty from her enforced vows, but united to the man of her heart.

Must there not, while watching the tilting of her graceful and gallant husband, must there not have been melancholy in her mirth?—must there not, in the keen encounter of wits during the banquet or the ball—must there not have mingled method with her madness?

Who shall record, or even refer to the hopes, and feelings, and wishes, and thoughts, and reflections of the thousands congregated thither; each one with feelings as intense, with hopes as individually important as those which influenced the royal King of France, or the majestic monarch of England! The loftiest of Christendom's knights, the loveliest of Christendom's daughters were assembled here; and the courteous Bayard, the noble Tremouille, the lofty Bourbon, felt inspired more gallantly, if possible, than was even their wont, when contending in all love and amity with the proudest of England's champions, in presence of the fairest of her blue-eyed maidens,—the noblest of her courtly dames.

Nor were the lofty and noble alone there congregated. After the magnificent structure for the king and court, after every thing in the shape of a tenement in, out, or about the little town of Guisnes, and the neighbouring hamlets, were occupied, two thousand eight hundred tents were set up on the side of the English alone. No noble or baron would be absent; but likewise knights, and squires, and yeomen flocked to the scene: citizens and city

wives disported their richest silks and their heaviest chains; jews went for gain, pedlars for knavery, tradespeople for their craft, rogues for mischief. Then there were "vagaboundes, plowmen, laborers, wagoners, and beggers, that for drunkennes lay in routes and heapes, so great resorte thether came, that bothe knightes and ladies that wer come to see the noblenes, were faine to lye in haye and strawe, and hold them thereof highly pleased."

The accommodations provided for the king and privileged members of his court on this occasion were more than magnificent; a vast and splendid edifice that seemed to be endued with the magnificence, and to rise almost with the celerity of that prepared by the slaves of the lamp, where the richest tapestry and silk embroidery—the costliest produce of the most accomplished artisans, were almost unnoticed amid the gold and jewellery by which they were surrounded—where all that art could produce, or riches devise had been lavished—all this has been often described. And the tent itself, the nucleus of the show, the point where the "brother" kings were to confer, was hung round with cloth of gold: the posts, the cones, the cords, the tents, were all of the same precious metal, which glittered here in such excessive profusion as to give that title to the meeting which has superseded all others—"The Field of the Cloth of Gold."

This gaudy pageant was the prelude to an era of great interest, for while dwelling on the "galanty shew" we cannot forget that now reigned Solyman the magnificent, and that this was the age of Leo the Tenth; that Charles the Fifth was now begin-

ning his influential course ; that a Sir Thomas More graced England ; and that in Germany there was “one Martin Luther,” who “belonged to an order of strolling friars.” Under Leo’s munificent encouragement, Rafaello produced those magnificent creations which have been the inspiration of subsequent ages ; and at home, under Wolsey’s enlightened patronage, colleges were founded, learning was encouraged, and the College of Physicians first instituted in 1518, found in him one of its warmest advocates and firmest supporters.

A modern writer gives the following amusing picture of part of the bustle attendant on the event we are considering. “The palace (of Westminster) and all its precincts became the elysium of tailors, embroiderers, and sempstresses. There might you see many a shady form gliding about from apartment to apartment, with smiling looks and extended shears, or armed with ell-wands more potent than Mercury’s rod, driving many a poor soul to perdition, and transforming his goodly acres into velvet suits, with tags of cloth of gold. So continual were the demands upon every kind of artisan, that the impossibility of executing them threw several into despair. One tailor who is reported to have undertaken to furnish fifty embroidered suits in three days, on beholding the mountain of gold and velvet that cumbered his shop-board, saw, like Brutus, the impossibility of victory, and, with Roman fortitude, fell on his own shears. Three armourers are said to have been completely melted with the heat of their furnaces ; and an unfortunate goldsmith swal-



lowed molten silver to escape the persecutions of the day.

“The road from London to Canterbury was covered during one whole week with carts and waggon, mules, horses, and soldiers; and so great was the confusion, that marshals were at length stationed to keep the whole in order, which of course increased the said confusion a hundred fold. So many were the ships passing between Dover and Calais, that the historians affirm they jostled each other on the road like a herd of great black porkers.

“The King went from station to station like a shepherd, driving all the better classes of the country before him, and leaving not a single straggler behind.”

Though we do not implicitly credit every point of this humorous statement, we think a small portion of description from the old chronicler Hall (we will really inflict *only* a small portion on our readers) will justify a good deal of it; but more especially it will enlighten us as to some of the elaborate conceits of the day, in which, it seems, the needle was as fully occupied as the pen.

Indeed, what would the “Field of the Cloth of Gold” have been without the skill of the needlewoman? *Would it have been at all?*

“The Frenche kyng sette hymself on a courser barded, covered with purple sattin, broched with golde, and embraudered with corbyns fethers round and buckeled; the fether was blacke and hached with gold. Corbyn is a rauē, and the firste silable of corbyn is *Cor*, whiche is a harte, a penne in Eng-

lish, is a fether in Frenche, and signifieth pain, and so it stode; this fether round was endles, the buckels wherwith the fethers wer fastened, betokeneth sothfastnes, thus was the devise, *harte fastened in pain endles, or pain in harte fastened endles.*

“Wednesdaie the 13 daie of June, the twoo hardie kynges armed at all peces, entered into the feld right nobly appareled, the Frenche kyng and all his parteners of chalenge were arraied in purple sattin, broched with golde and purple velvet, embrodered with litle rolles of white sattin wherein was written *quando*, all bardes and garmentes wer set full of the same, and all the residue where was no rolles, were poudered and set with the letter ell as thus, L, whiche in Frenche is she, which was interpreted to be *quando elle*, when she, and ensuyng the devise of the first daie it signifieth together, *harte fastened in pain endles, when she.*

“The Frenche kyng likewise armed at al pointes mounted on a courser royal, all his apparel as wel bardes as garmentes were purple velvet, entred the one with the other, embrodred ful of litle bookes of white satten, and in the bokes were written *a me*; aboute the borders of the bardes and the borders of the garmentes, a chaine of blewe like iron, resembling the chayne of a well or prison chaine, whiche was enterpreted to be *liber*, a booke; within this boke was written as is sayed, *a me*, put these two together, and it maketh *libera me*; the chayne betokeneth prison or bondes. and so maketh together in Englishe, *deliver me of bōdes*; put to y<sup>e</sup> reason, the fyrst day, second day, and third day of chaunge, for he chaunged but the second day, and it is *hart*

*fastened in paine endles, when she deliuereth me not of bondes; thus was thinterpretation made, but whether it were so in all thinges or not I may not say."*

The following animated picture from an author already quoted, has been drawn of this spirit-stirring scene:—

“ Upon a large open green, that extended on the outside of the walls, was to be seen a multitude of tents of all kinds and colours, with a multitude of busy human beings, employed in raising fresh pavilions on every open space, or in decorating those already spread with streamers, pennons, and banners of all the bright hues under the sun. Long lines of horses and mules, loaded with armour or baggage, and ornamented with gay ribbons to put them in harmony with the scene, were winding about all over the plain, some proceeding towards the town, some seeking the tents of their several lords, while mingled amongst them, appeared various bands of soldiers, on horseback and on foot, with the rays of the declining sun catching upon the heads of their bills and lances; and together with the white cassock and broad red cross, marking them out from all the other objects. Here and there, too, might be seen a party of knights and gentlemen cantering over the plain, and enjoying the bustle of the scene, or standing in separate groups, issuing their orders for the erection and garnishing of their tents; while couriers, and poursuivants, and heralds, in all their gay dresses, mingled with mule drivers, lacqueys, and peasants, armourers, pages, and tent stretchers, made up the living part of the landscape.

“The sounding of the trumpets to horse, the shouts of the various leaders, the loud cries of the marshals and heralds, and the roaring of artillery from the castle, as the king put his foot in the stirrup, all combined to make one general outcry rarely equalled. Gradually the tumult subsided, gradually also the confused assemblage assumed a regular form. Flags, and pennons, and banderols, embroidered banners, and scutcheons; silver pillars, and crosses, and crooks, ranged themselves in long line; and the bright procession, an interminable stream of living gold, began to wind across the plain. First came about five hundred of the gayest and wealthiest gentlemen of England, below the rank of baron; squires, knights, and bannerets, rivalling each other in the richness of their apparel and the beauty of their horses; while the pennons of the knights fluttered above their heads, marking the place of the English chivalry. Next appeared the proud barons of the realm, each with his banner borne before him, and followed by a custrel with the shield of his arms. To these again succeeded the bishops, not in the simple robes of the Protestant clergy, but in the more gorgeous habits of the Church of Rome; while close upon their steps rode the higher nobility, surrounding the immediate person of the king, and offering the most splendid mass of gold and jewels that the summer sun ever shone upon.

“Slowly the procession moved forward to allow the line of those on foot to keep an equal pace. Nor did this band offer a less gay and pleasing sight

than the cavalcade, for here might be seen the athletic forms of the sturdy English yeomanry, clothed in the various splendid liveries of their several lords, with the family cognisance embroidered on the bosom and arm, and the banners and banderols of their particular houses carried in the front of each company. Here also was to be seen the picked guard of the King of England, magnificently dressed for the occasion, with the royal banner carried in their centre by the deputy standard bearer, and the banner of their company by their own ancient. In the rear of all, marshalled by officers appointed for the purpose, came the band of those whose rank did not entitle them to take place in the cavalcade, but who had sufficient interest at court to be admitted to the meeting. Though of an inferior class, this company was not the least splendid in the field; for here were all the wealthy tradesmen of the court, habited in many a rich garment, furnished by the extravagance of those that rode before; and many a gold chain hung round their necks, that not long ago had lain in the purse of some prodigal customer."

But we cease, being fully of opinion with the old chronicler that "to tell the apparel of the ladies, their riche attyres, their sumptuous juelles, their diversities of beauties, and their goodly behaviour from day to day sithe the fyrst metyng, I assure you ten menes wittes can scarce declare it."

And in a few days, a few short days, all was at an end; and the pomp and the pageantry, the mirth and the revelry, was but as a dream—a most bitter,



indeed, and painful dream to hundreds who had bartered away their substance for the sake of a transient glitter :

“ We seken fast after felicite  
But we go wrong ful often trewely,  
Thus may we sayen alle.”

Homely indeed, after the paraphernalia of the “Field of the Cloth of Gold,” would appear the homes of England on the return of their masters. For though the nobles had begun to remove the martial fronts of their castles, and endeavoured to render them more commodious, yet in architecture the nation participated neither the spirit nor the taste of its sovereign. The mansions of the gentlemen were, we are told, still sordid; the huts of the peasantry poor and wretched. The former were generally thatched buildings composed of timber, or, where wood was scarce, of large posts inserted in the earth, filled up in the interstices with rubbish, plastered within, and covered on the outside with coarse clay. The latter were light frames, prepared in the forest at small expense, and when erected, probably covered with mud. In cities the houses were constructed mostly of the same materials, for bricks were still too costly for general use; and the stories seem to have projected forward as they rose in height, intercepting sunshine and air from the streets beneath. The apartments were stifling, lighted by lattices, so contrived as to prohibit the occasional and salutary admission of external air. The floors were of clay, strewn with rushes, which often remained for years a receptacle of every pollution.\*

\* Henry.

In an inventory of the goods and chattels of Sir Andrew Foscawe, Knight, dated in the 30th year of King Henry the Eighth, are the following furnitures. We select the hall and the best parlour, in which he entertained company, first premising that he possessed a large and noble service of rich plate worth an amazing sum, and so much land as proved him to be a wealthy man :—

“ The hall.—A hangin of greine say, bordered with darneng (or needlework); item a grete side table, with standinge tressels; item a small joyned cuberde, of waynscott, and a short piece of counterfett carpett upon it; item a square cuberde, and a large piece of counterfett wyndowe, and five formes, &c.

“ Perler.—Imprim., a hangynge of greene say and red, panede; item a table with two tressels, and a greyne verders carpet upon it; three greyne verders cushyns; a joyned cupberd, and a carpett upon it; a piece of verders carpet in one window, and a piece of counterfeit carpett in the other; one Flemishe chaire; four joyned stooles; a joyned forme; a wyker skryne; two large awndyerns, a fyer forke, a fyer pan, a payer of tonges; item a lowe joyned stole; two joyned foote-stoles; a rounde table of cipress; and a piece of counterfeitt carpett upon it; item a paynted table (or picture) of the Epiphany of our Lord.” \*

But notwithstanding this apparent meagreness of accommodation, luxury in architecture was making rapid strides in the land. Wolsey was as magnificent in this taste as in others, as Hampton Court,

\* Strutt's Manners and Customs.

“ a residence,” says Grotius, “ befitting rather a god than a king,” yet remains to attest. The walls of his chambers at York Place, (Whitehall,) were hung with cloth of gold, and tapestry still more precious, representing the most remarkable events in sacred history—for the easel was then subordinate to the loom.

The subjects of the tapestry in York Place consisted, we are told, of triumphs, probably Roman; the story of Absalom, bordered with the cardinal's arms; the Petition of Esther, and the Honouring of Mordecai; the History of Sampson, bordered with the cardinal's arms; the History of Solomon; the History of Susannah and the Elders, bordered with the cardinal's arms; the History of Jacob, also bordered; Holofernes and Judith, bordered; the Story of Joseph, of David, of St. John the Baptist; the History of the Virgin; the Passion of Christ; the Worthies; the Story of Nebuchadnezzar; a Pilgrimage; all bordered.

This place—Whitehall—Henry decorated magnificently; erected splendid gateways, and threw a gallery across to the Park, where he erected a tilt-yard, with all royal and courtly appurtenances, and converted the whole into a royal manor. This was not until after fire had ravaged the ancient, time-honoured, and kingly palace of Westminster, a place which perhaps was the most truly regal of any which England ever beheld. Recorded as a royal residence as early—almost—as there is record of the existence of our venerable abbey; inhabited by Knute the Dane; rebuilt by Edward the Confessor; remodelled by Henry the Third; receiving lustre

from the residence, and ever-added splendour from the liberality of a long line of illustrious monarchs, it had obtained a hold on the mind which is even yet not passed away, although the ravages of time, and of fire, and the desecrations of subsequent ages, have scarcely left stone or token of the original structure.

After the fire, however, Henry forsook it. He it was who first built St. James's Palace on the site of an hospital which had formerly stood there. He also possessed, amongst other royal retreats, Havering Bower, so called from the legend of St. Edward receiving a ring from St. John the Evangelist on this spot by the hands of a pilgrim from the Holy Land; which legend is represented at length in Westminster Abbey; Eltham, in Kent, where the king frequently passed his Christmas; Greenwich, where Elizabeth was born; and Woodstock, celebrated for

“ the unhappy fate  
Of Rosamond, who long ago  
Prov'd most unfortunate.”

The ancient palace of the Savoy had changed its destination as a royal residence only in his father's time. With the single exception of Westminster—if indeed that—the most magnificent palace which the hand of liberality ever raised, which the finger of taste ever embellished. Various indeed have been the changes to which it has been doomed, and now not one stone remains on another to say that such things have been. Now—of the thousands who traverse the spot, scarce one, at long and far distant intervals, may glance at the dim memories of the past, to think of the plumed knights and high-born

dames who revelled in its halls ; the crowned and anointed kings who, monarch or captive, trod its lofty chambers ; the gleaming warriors who paced its embattled courts ; the gracious queen who caused its walls to echo the sounds of joy ; the subtle heads which plodded beneath its gloomy shades ; the unhappy exiles who found a refuge within its dim recesses ; or\* the lame, the sick, the impotent, who in the midst of suffering blessed the home that sheltered them, the hands that ministered to their woes.

No. The majestic walls of the Savoy are in the dust, and not merely all trace, but all idea of its radiant gardens and sunny bowers, its sparkling fountains and verdant lawns, is lost even to the imagination in the matter-of-fact, business-like demeanour of the myriads of plodders who are ever traversing the dusty and bustling environs of Waterloo-bridge. In our closets we may perchance compel the unromantic realities of the present to yield beneath the brilliant imaginations of the past ; but on the spot itself it is impossible.

Who can stand in Wellington-street, on the verge of Waterloo-bridge, and fancy it a princely mansion, from the lofty battlements of which a royal banner is flying, while numerous retainers keep watch below ? Probably the sounds of harp and song may be heard as lofty nobles and courtly dames are seen to tread the verdant alleys and flower-bestrewn paths which lead to the bright and glancing river, where a costly barge (from which the sounds proceed) is waiting

\* It was at length converted into an hospital.



its distinguished freight. Ever and anon are these seen gliding along in the sunbeams, or resting at the avenue leading to one or other of the noble mansions with which the bright strand is sprinkled.

Of these, perhaps, the most gorgeous is York-place, while farthest in the distance rise the fortified walls of the old palace of Westminster, inferior only to those of the ancient abbey, which are seen to rise, dimmed, yet distinct, in the soft but glowing haze cast around by the setting sun.

And that building seen on the opposite side of the river? Strangely situated it seems, and in a swamp, and with none of the felicity of aspect appertaining to its loftier neighbour, the Savoy. Yet its lofty tower, its embattled gateway, seem to infer some important destination. And such it had. The unassuming and unattractively placed edifice has outlived its more aspiring neighbours; and while the stately palace of the Savoy is extinct, and the slight remains of Westminster are desecrated, the time-honoured walls of Lambeth yet shelter the head of learning and dignify the location in which they were reared.

Eastward of our position the city looks dim and crowded; but, with the exception of the sprinkled mansions to which we have alluded, there is little to break the natural characteristics of the scene between Temple-bar and the West Minster. The hermitage and hospital on the site of Northumberland House harmonise well with the scene; the little cluster of cottages at Charing has a rural aspect; and that beautiful and touching memento of unfeeling love and undiminished affection—that tribute

to all that was good and excellent in woman—the Cross, which, formed of the purest and, as yet, unsoiled white marble, raised its emblem of faith and hope, gleaming like silver in the brilliant sky—that—would that we had it still !

Somewhat nearer, the May-pole stands out in gay relief from the woods which envelop the hills northward, where yet the timid fawn could shelter, and the fearful hare forget its watch ; where yet perchance the fairies held their revels when the moon shone bright ; where they filled to the brim the “fairy-cups” and pledged each other in dew ; where they played at “hide and seek” in the harebells, ran races in the branches of the trees, and nestled on the leaves, on which they glittered like diamonds ; where they launched their tiny barks on the sparkling rivulets, breathing ere morning’s dawn on the flowers to awaken them, tinting the gossamer’s web with silver, and scattering pearls over the drops of dew.

Closer around, among meadows and pastures, are all sounds and emblems of rural life ; which as yet are but agreeably varied, not ruthlessly annihilated, by the encroachments of population and the increase of trade.

Truly this is a difficult picture to realise on Waterloo-bridge, yet is it nevertheless a tolerably correct one of this portion of our metropolis at the time of “The Field of the Cloth of Gold.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE NEEDLE.

"A grave Reformer of old Rents decay'd."—J. TAYLOR.

"His garment—

With thornes together pind and patched was."

FAERIE QUEENE.

*Hodge.* "Tush, tush, her neele, her neele, her neele, man; tys  
neither flesh nor fish,

A lytle thing with an hole in the ende, as bright as any  
syller,

Small, long, sharp at the point, and straight as any  
pillar."

*Diccon.* "I know not what it is thou menest, thou bringst me more  
in doubt."

*Hodge.* "Knowest not what Tom tailor's man sits broching thro'  
a clout?

A neele, a neele, a neele, my gammer's neele is gone.

GAMMER GURTON'S NEEDLE.

It is said in the old chronicles that previous to the arrival of Anne of Bohemia, Queen of Richard the Second, the English ladies fastened their robes with skewers; but as it is known that pins were in use among the early British, since in the barrows that have been opened numbers of "neat and efficient" ivory pins were found to have been used in arrang-

ing the grave-clothes, it is probable that this remark is unfounded.

The pins of a later date than the above were made of boxwood, bone, ivory, and some few of silver. They were larger than those of the present day, which seem to have been unknown in England till about the middle of the fifteenth century. In 1543, however, the manufacture of brass pins had become sufficiently important to claim the attention of the legislature, an Act having been passed that year by which it was enacted, "That no person shall put to sale any pins, but only such as shall be double headed and have the head soldered fast to the shank, the pins well smoothed, and the shank well sharpened."

Gloucestershire is noted for the number of its pin manufactories. They were first introduced in that county, in 1626, by John Tilsby; and it is said that at this time they employ 1,500 hands, and send up to the metropolis upwards of £20,000 of pins annually.

Our motto says, however, that his garment

"With thornes together pind and *patched* was;"

and a French writer says, that before the invention of steel needles people were obliged to make use of thorns, fish bones, &c., but that since "*l'établissement des sociétés, ce petit outil est devenu d'un usage indispensable dans une infinité d'arts et d'occasions.*"

He proceeds:—"De toutes les manières d'attacher l'un à l'autre deux corps flexibles, celle qui se pratique avec l'aiguille est une des plus universelle-

ment répandues: aussi distingue-t'-on un grand nombre d'aiguilles différentes. On a les aiguilles à coudre, ou de tailleur; les aiguilles de chirurgie, d'artillerie, de bonnetier, ou faiseur de bas au métier, d'horloger, de cirier, de drapier, de gainier, de perruquier, de coiffeuse, de faiseur de coiffe à perruques, de piqueur d'étuis, tabatières, et autres semblables ouvrages; de sellier, d'ouvrier en soie, de brodeur, de tapissier, de chandellier, d'emballleur; à matelas, à empointer, à tricoter, à enfiler, à presser, à brocher, à relier, à natter, à boussole ou aimantée, &c. &c."

Needles are said to have been first made in England by a native of India, in 1545, but the art was lost at his death; it was, however, recovered by Christopher Greening, in 1560, who was settled with his three children, Elizabeth, John, and Thomas, by Mr. Damar, ancestor of the present Lord Milton, at Long Crendon, in Bucks, where the manufactory has been carried on from that time to the present period.\*

Thus our readers will remark, that until far on in the sixteenth century, there was not a needle to be had but of foreign manufacture; and bearing this circumstance in mind, they will be able to enter more fully into the feelings of those who set such inestimable value on a needle. And, indeed, *if* all we are told of them be true, needles could not be

\* It is worth while to remark the circumstance, that by a machine of the simplest construction, being nothing in fact but a tray, 20,000 needles thrown promiscuously together, mixed and entangled in every way, are laid parallel, heads to heads, and points to points, in the course of three or four minutes.



too highly esteemed. For instance, we were told of an old woman who had used one needle so long and so constantly for mending stockings, that at last the needle was able to do them of itself. At length, and while the needle was in the full perfection of its powers, the old woman died. A neighbour, whose numerous "olive branches" caused her to have a full share of matronly employment, hastened to possess herself of this domestic treasure, and gathered round her the weekly accumulation of sewing, not doubting but that with her new ally, the wonder-working needle, the unwieldy work-basket would be cleared, "in no time," of its overflowing contents. But even the all-powerful needle was of no avail without thread, and she forthwith proceeded to invest it with a long one. But thread it she could not; it resisted her most strenuous endeavours. In vain she turned and re-turned the needle, the eye was plain enough to be seen; in vain she cut and screwed the thread, she burnt it in the candle, she nipped it with the scissars, she rolled it with her lips, she twizled it between her finger and thumb: the pointed end was fine as fine could be, but enter the eye of the needle it would not. At length, determined not to relinquish her project whilst any hope remained of its accomplishment, she borrowed magnifying glass to examine the "little weapon" more accurately. And there, "large as life and twice as natural," a pearly gem, a translucent drop, a crystal *tear* stood right in the gap, and filled to overflowing the eye of the needle. It was weeping for the death of its old mistress; it refused consolation; it was never threaded again.

We give this incident on the testimony of a gallant naval officer; an unquestionable authority, though we are fully aware that some of our readers may be ungenerously sceptical, and perhaps even rude enough to attempt some vile pun about the brave sailor's "drawing a long yarn."

If, however, Gammer Gurton's needle resembled the one we have just referred to, and that, too, at a time when a needle, even not supernaturally endowed, was not to be had of English manufacture, and therefore could only be purchased probably at a high price, we cannot wonder at the aggrieved feelings of her domestic circle when the catastrophe occurred which is depicted as follows:—The parties interested were the Dame Gammer Gurton herself; Hodge, her farming man; Tib, her maid; Cocke, her boy; and Gib, her cat. The play from which our quotation is taken is not without some pretensions to wit, though of the coarsest kind: it is supposed to have been first performed at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1566; and Warton observes on it, that while Latimer's sermons were in vogue at court, Gammer Gurton's needle might well be tolerated at the university.

ACT I. SCENE 3. HODGE AND TIB.

*Hodge.* "I am agast, by the masse, I wot not what to do;  
I had need blesse me well before I go them to:  
Perchance, some felon spirit may haunt our house indeed,  
And then I were but a noddie to venter where's no need."

*Tib.* "I'm worse than mad, by the masse, to be at this stay.  
I'm chid, I'm blam'd, and beaten all th' hours on the  
day.  
Lamed and hunger starved, pricked up all in jagges,  
Having no patch to hide my backe, save a few rotten  
ragges."

*Hodge.* "I say, Tib, f thou be Tib, as I trow sure thou be,  
What devil make ado is this between our dame and thee?"

*Tib.* "Truly, Hodge, thou had a good turn thou wart not here this  
while;

It had been better for some of us to have been hence a  
mile:

My Gammer is so out of course, and frantike all at once,  
That Cocke, our boy, and I poor wench, have felt it on  
our bones."

*Hodge.* "What is the matter, say on, Tib, whereat she taketh  
so on?"

*Tib.* "She is undone, she saith (alas) her life and joy is gone:  
If she hear not of some comfort, she is she saith but dead,  
Shall never come within her lips, on inch of meat ne  
bread.

And heavy, heavy is her grief, as, Hodge, we all shall  
feel."—

*Hodge.* "My conscience, Tib, my Gammer has never lost her  
neele?"

"Her neele."

*Hodge.* "Her neele?"

*Tib.* "Her neele, by him that made me!"

*Hodge.* "How a murrain came this chaunce (say Tib) unto her  
dame?

*Tib.* "My Gammer sat her down on the pes, and bade me reach  
thy breches,

And by and by, a vengeance on it, or she had take two  
stitches

To clout upon the knee, by chaunce aside she lears,  
And Gib our cat, in the milk pan, she spied over head and  
ears.

Ah! out, out, theefe, she cried aloud, and swapt the  
breeches down,

Up went her staffe, and out leapt Gib at doors into the  
town:

And since that time was never wight cold set their eyes  
upon it.

God's malison she have Cocke and I bid twentie times  
light on it."

*Hodge.* "And is not then my breches sewed up, to-morrow that I  
shuld wear?"

*Tib.* "No, in faith, Hodge, thy breches lie, for all this never the near."

*Hodge.* "Now a vengeance light on al the sort, that better shold have kept it;

The cat, the house, and Tib our maid, that better should have swept it.

Se, where she cometh crawling! Come on, come on thy lagging way;

Ye have made a fair daies worke, have you not? pray you, say."

ACT I. SCENE 4. GAMMER, HODGE, TIB, COCKE.

*Gammer.* "Alas, alas, I may well curse and ban

This day, that ever I saw it, with Gib and the milke pan.

For these, and ill lucke together, as knoweth Cocke my boy,

Have stacke away my dear neele, and rob'd me of my joy,

My fair long straight neele, that was mine only treasure,

The first day of my sorrow is, and last of my pleasure."

*Hodge.* "Might ha kept it when ye had it; but fools will be fools still:

Lose that is fast in your hands? ye need not, but ye will."

*Gammer.* "Go hie the, Tib, and run along, to th' end here of the town.

Didst carry out dust in thy lap? seek where thou porest it down;

And as thou sawest me roking in the ashes where I morned,

So see in all the heap of dust thou leave no straw unturned."

*Hodge.* "Your neele lost? it is pitie you shold lacke care and endles sorrow.

Tell me, how shall my breches be sewid? shall I go thus to-morrow?"

*Gammer.* "Ah, Hodge, Hodge, if that I could find my neele, by the reed,

I'd sew thy breches, I promise the, with full good  
double threed,  
And set a patch on either knee, shall last this months  
twain,  
Now God, and Saint Sithe, I pray, to send it back  
again."

*Hodge.* "Whereto served your hands and eyes, but your neele  
keep?  
What devil had you els to do? ye keep, I wot, no  
sheep.  
I'm fain abroad to dig and delve, in water, mire and  
clay,  
Sossing and possing in the dirt, still from day to day  
A hundred things that be abroad, I'm set to see them  
weel;  
And four of you sit idle at home, and cannot keep a  
neele."

*Gammer.* "My neele, alas, I lost, Hodge, what time I me up  
hasted,  
To save milk set up for thee, which Gib our cat hath  
wasted."

*Hodge.* "The devil he take both Gib and Tib, with all the rest;  
I'm always sure of the worst end, whoever have the  
best.  
Where ha you ben fidging abroad, since you your neele  
lost?"

*Gammer.* "Within the house, and at the door, sitting by this same  
post;  
Where I was looking a long hour, before these folke  
came here;  
But, wel away! all was in vain, my neele is never the  
near!"

"Gammer Gurton's Needle," says Hazlitt, "is a regular comedy, in five acts, built on the circumstance of an old woman having lost her needle which throws the whole village into confusion, till it is at last providentially found sticking in an unlucky part of Hodge's dress. This must evidently have happened at a time when the manufactures of



Sheffield and Birmingham had not reached the height of perfection which they have at present done. Suppose that there is only one sewing needle in a village, that the owner, a diligent notable old dame, loses it, that a mischief-making wag sets it about that another old woman has stolen this valuable instrument of household industry, that strict search is made every where in-doors for it in vain, and that then the incensed parties sally forth to scold it out in the open air, till words end in blows, and the affair is referred over to the higher authorities, and we shall have an exact idea (though, perhaps, not so lively a one) of what passes in this authentic document between Gammer Gurton and her gossip Dame Chat; Dickon the Bedlam (the causer of these harms); Hodge, Gammer Gurton's servant; Tyb, her maid; Cocke, her 'prentice boy; Doll Scapethrift; Master Baillie, his master; Dr. Rat, the curate; and Gib, the cat, who may fairly be reckoned one of the *dramatis personæ*, and performs no mean part."

From the needle itself the transition is easy to the needlework which was in vogue at the time when this little implement was so valuable and rare a commodity. We are told that the various kinds of needlework practised at this time would, if enumerated, astonish even the most industrious of our modern ladies. The lover of Shakspeare will remember that the term *point device* is often used by him, and that, indeed, it is a term frequently met with in the writers of that age with various applications; and it is originally derived, according to Mr. Douce, from the fine stitchery of the ladies.

It has been properly stated, that *point device* signifies *exact, nicely, finical*; but nothing has been offered concerning the etymology, except that we got the expression from the French. It has, in fact, been supplied from the labours of the needle. *Poinct*, in the French language, denotes a *stitch*; *devise* any thing *invented, disposed, or arranged*. *Point devise* was, therefore, a particular sort of patterned lace worked with the needle; and the term *point lace* is still familiar to every female. They had likewise their *point-coupé, point-compté, dentelle au point devant l'aiguille, &c. &c.*

But it is apparent, he adds, that the expression *point devise* became applicable, in a *secondary* sense, to whatever was uncommonly exact, or constructed with the nicety and precision of stitches made or devised with the needle.

Various books of patterns of needlework for the assistance and encouragement of the fair stitchers were published in those days. Mr. Douce\* enumerates some of them, and the omission of any part of his notation would be unpardonable in the present work.

The earliest on the list is an Italian book, under the title of “Esemplario di lavori: dove le tenere fanciulle et altre donne nobile potranno facilmente imparare il modo et ordine di lavorare, cusire, racquare, et finalment far tutte quelle gentillezze et lodevili opere, le quali pò fare una donna virtuosa con laco in mano, con li suoi compasse et misure. Vinegia, per Nicolo D'Aristotile detto Zoppino, MDXXIX. 8vo.”

\* Illustrations, vol. ii. p. 92.

The next that occurs was likewise set forth by an Italian, and entitled, "*Les singuliers et nouveaux pourtraicts du Seigneur Federic de Vinciolo Venetien, pour toutes sortes d'ouvrages de lingerie. Paris, 1588. 4to.*" It is dedicated to the Queen of France, and had been already twice published.

In 1599 a second part came out, which is much more difficult to be met with than the former, and sometimes contains a neat portrait, by Gaultier, of Catherine de Bourbon, the sister of Henry the Fourth.

The next is "*Nouveaux pourtraicts de point coupé et dantelles en petite moyenne et grande forme, nouvellement inventez et mis en lumière. Imprimé à Montbeliard, 1598. 4to.*" It has an address to the ladies, and a poem exhorting young damsels to be industrious; but the author's name does not appear. Vincentio's work was published in England, and printed by John Wolfe, under the title of "*New and Singular Patternes and Workes of Linnen, serving for paternes to make all sortes of lace, edginges, and cutworkes. Newly invented for the profite and contentment of ladies, gentilwomen, and others that are desirous of this Art. 1591. 4to.*" He seems also to have printed it with a French title.

We have then another English book, of which this is the title: "*Here foloweth certaine Patternes of Cutworkes; newly invented and never published before. Also, sundry sortes of spots, as flowers, birdes, and fishes, &c., and will fitly serve to be wrought, some with gould, some with silke, and some with crewell in coullers; or otherwise at your*

pleasure. And never but once published before. Printed by Rich. Shorleyker." No date. In oblong quarto.

And lastly, another oblong quarto, entitled, "The Needle's Excellency, a new booke, wherein are divers admirable workes wrought with the needle. Newly invented and cut in copper for the pleasure and profit of the industrious." Printed for James Boler, &c., 1640. Beneath this title is a neat engraving of three ladies in a flower garden, under the names of Wisdom, Industrie, and Follie. Prefixed to the patterns are sundry poems in commendation of the needle, and describing the characters of ladies who have been eminent for their skill in needlework, among whom are Queen Elizabeth and the Countess of Pembroke. The poems were composed by John Taylor the water poet. It appears that the work had gone through twelve impressions, and yet a copy is now scarcely to be met with. This may be accounted for by supposing that such books were generally cut to pieces, and used by women to work upon or transfer to their samplers. From the dress of a lady and gentleman on one of the patterns in the last mentioned book, it appears to have been originally published in the reign of James the First. All the others are embellished with a multitude of patterns elegantly cut in wood, several of which are eminently conspicuous for their taste and beauty.

We are happy to add a little further information on some of these works, and on others preserved in the British Museum.

"Les singuliers et nouveaux Pourtraicts du Seigneur Federic dé Vinciolo Venitien, pour toutes

sortes d'ouvrages de Lingerie. Dédié à la Reyne. A Paris, 1578."\*

The book opens with a sonnet to the fair, which announces to them an admirable motive for the work itself:—

“ Pour tromper vos ennuis, et l'esprit employer.”

Aux Dames et Damoiselles.

SONNET.

“ L'un s'efforce à gaigner le cœur des grāds Seigneurs  
Pour posseder en fin une exquise richesse ;  
L'autre aspire aux estats, pour monter en altesse,  
Et l'autre, par la guerre allèche les honneurs.

“ Quand à moy, seulement pour chasser mes langueurs,  
Je me sen satisfait de vivre en petitesse,  
Et de faire si bien, qu'aux Dames ie delaisse  
Un grand contentement en mes graves labeurs.

“ Prenez doncques en gré (mes Dames) ie vous prie,  
Ces pourtrais ouvragez lesquels ie vous dedie,  
Pour tromper vos ennuis, et l'esprit employer.

“ En ceste nouveauté, pourrez beaucoup apprendre,  
Et maistresses en fin en cest œuvre vous rendre,  
Le travail est plaisant: Si grand est le loyer.”

Which, barring elegant diction and poetic rule, may be read thus:—

Whilst one man worships lordly state  
As yielding all that he desires—  
This, fertile acres begs from fate ;  
Another, bloody laurels fires.

To dissipate my devils blue,  
Trifles, I'm satisfied to do ;  
For surely if the fair I please,  
My very labours smack of ease.

\* This seems to be a somewhat earlier edition of the second book in Mr. Douce's list.



Take then, fair ladies, I you pray,  
The book which at your feet I lay,  
To make you happy, brisk and gay.

There's much you here may learn anew,  
Which *comme il faut* will render you,  
And bring you joy and honour too.

Proceed we to the—

“Ouvrages de point Coupé,” of which there are thirty-six. Some birds, animals, and figures are introduced; but the patterns are chiefly arabesque, set off in white, on a thick black ground.

Then, with a repetition of the ornamented title-page, come about fifty patterns, which are represented much like the German patterns of the present day, in squares for stitches, but not so finely wrought as some which we shall presently notice. These patterns consist of arabesques, figures, birds, beasts, flowers, in every variety. To many the stitches are ready counted (as well as portrayed), thus:—

“Ce Pélican contient en longueur 70 mailles, et en hauteur 65.” This pattern of maternity is represented as pecking her breast, towards which three young ones are flying; their course being indicated by the three lines of white stitches, all converging to the living nest.

“Ce Griffon cōtient en hauteur 58 mailles, et en lōgueur 67.” Small must be the skill of the needle-woman who does not make this a very rampant animal indeed.

“Ce Paon contient en longueur 65 mailles, et en hauteur 61.”

“La Licorne en hauteur cōtiēt 44 mailles, et en longueur 62, &c. &c.”

“La bordure contient 25 mailles.”

“La bordure de haut cotiēt 35 mailles.” This is a very handsome one, resembling pine apples.

“Ce quarré contient 65 mailles.” There are several of these squares, and borders appended, of very rich patterns.

But the book contains far more ambitious designs. There are Sol, Luna, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Neptune, and others, whose dignities and vocation must be inferred from the emblematical accompaniments.

There is “La Déesse des fleurs représentant le printemps.”

“La Déesse des Bleds representant l'esté.”

“Ce Baccus representant l'Autonne.”

“Ceste figure representant l'hiver,” &c. &c.

Appended is this “Extraict du Privilege.”

“Per grace et privelege du Roy, est permis a Jean le Clerc le jeune, tailleur d'histoires à Paris, d'imprimer ou faire imprimer vëdre et distribuer un livre intitulé livre de patrons de Lingerie, DEDIE A LA ROYNE, nouvellement inventé par le Seigneur Federic de Vinciolo Venitien, avec deffences à tous Libraires, Imprimeurs, ou autres, de quelque condition et qualité quilz soyent, de faire ny contrefaire, aptisser ny agrādir, ou pocher lesdits figures, ny exposer en vente ledict Livre sans le cōgé ou permission dudict le Clerc, et ce jusques au temps et terme de neuf ans finis et accomplis, sur peine de confiscation de tous les livres qui se trouveront imprimez, et demande arbitraire: comme plus a plein est declaré en lettres patentes, données à Paris ce douziesme jour de Novembre, 1587.”

Another work, preserved in the British Museum, was published at Strasbourg, 1596, seemingly from designs of the same Vinciolo. These consist of about six-and-thirty plates, with patterns in white on a black ground, consisting of a few birds and figures, but chiefly of stars and wreaths pricked out in every possible variety; and at the end of the book a dozen richly wrought patterns, without any edging, were seemingly designed for what we should now call "insertion" work or lace.

There is another, by the same author, printed at Basil in 1599, which varies but slightly from the foregoing.

This Frederick de Vinciolo is doubtless the same person who was summoned to France, by Catherine de Medicis, to instruct the ladies of the court in the art of netting the lace of which the then fashionable ruffs were made.

In another volume we have—

"Corona delli Nobili et virtuose Donne, nel quale si dimostra in varij Disegni tutte le sorti di Mostre di punti tagliati, punti in Aria, punti Fiammenghi, punti à Reticelle, e d' ogni altre sorte, cosi per Freggi, per Merli, e Rosette, che con l' Aco si usano hoggidì per tutta l' Europa.

"E molte delle quali Mostre possono servire ancora per opere a Mayzette.

"Con le dichiarazioni a le Mostre a Lavori fatti da Lugretia Romana.

"In Venetia appresso Alessandro di Vecchi, 1620."

The plates here are very similar to those in the above-mentioned works. Some are accompanied by

short explanations, saying where they are most used and to whom they are best suited, as—

“Hopera Bellissima, che per il più le Signore Duchese, et altre Signore si servono per li suoi lavori.”

“Queste bellissime Rosette usano anco le gentildonne Venetiane da far traverse.”

But certainly the best work of the kind is, “The Needle’s Excellency,” referred to in Mr. Douce’s list. It contains a variety of plates, of which the patterns are all, or nearly all, arabesque. They are beautifully executed, many of them being very similar to, and equally fine with, the German patterns before the colouring is put on, which, though it guides the eye, defaces the work. These are seldom seen uncoloured, the Germans having a jealousy of sending them; but we have seen, through the polite attention of Mr. Wilks, of Regent Street, one or two in this state, and we could not but admire the extreme delicacy and beauty of the work. Some few of the patterns in the book we are now referring to are so extremely similar, that we doubt not the modern artists have borrowed the *idea* of their beautifully traced patterns from this or some similar work; thereby adding one more proof of the truth of the oft quoted proverb, “There is nothing new under the sun.”

As a fitting close to this chapter, we give the Needle’s praises in full, as sung by the water poet, John Taylor, and prefixed to the last-mentioned work.

## THE PRAISE OF THE NEEDLE.

" To all dispersed sorts of arts and trades,  
 I write the needles prayse (that never fades)  
 So long as chi'dren shall be got or borne,  
 So long as garments shall be made or worne,  
 So logg as hemp or flax, or sheep shall bear  
 Their linnen wollen fleeces yeare by yeare:  
 So long as silkwormes, with exhausted spoile,  
 Of their own entrailes for man's gaine shall toyle:  
 Yea till the world be quite dissolv'd and past,  
 So long at least, the need'es use shall last:  
 And though from earth his being did begin,  
 Yet through the fire he did his honour win:  
 And unto those that doe his service lacke,  
 He's true as steele and mettle to the backe  
 He hath indeed, I see, small single sight,  
 Yet like a pigmy, *Polipheme* in fight:  
 As a stout captaine, bravely he leades on,  
 (Not fearing colours) till the worke be done,  
 Through thicke and thinne he is most sharply set,  
 With speed through stitch, he will the conquest get.  
 And as a souldier (*Frenchefyde* with heat)  
 Maim'd from the warres is forc'd to make retreat;  
 So when a needles point is broke, and gone,  
*No point Monsieur*, he's maim'd, his worke is done,  
 And more the needles honour to advance,  
 It is a tailor's javelin, or his lance;  
 And for my countries quiet, I should like,  
 That women kinde should use no other pike.  
 It will increase their peace, enlarge their store,  
 To use their tongues lesse, and their needles more.  
 The needles sharpnesse, profit yields, and pleasure,  
 But sharpnesse of the tongue, bites out of measure.  
 A needle (though it be but small and slender)  
 Yet it is both a maker and a mender:  
 A grave Reformer of old rents decay'd,  
 Stops holes and seames and desperate cuts display'd,  
 And thus without the needle we may see  
 We should without our bibs and biggins bee;  
 No shirts or smockes, our nakednesse to hide,  
 No garments gay, to make us magnifide:



No shadowes, shapparoones, caules, bands, ruffs, kuffs,  
No kerchiefes, quoyfes, chinclouts, or marry-muffes,  
No cros cloaths, aprons, handkerchiefes, or falls,  
No table-cloathes, for parlours or for halls,  
No sheetes, no towels, napkins, pillow beares,  
Nor any garment man or woman weares.  
Thus is a needle prov'd an instrument  
Of profit, pleasure, and of ornament.  
Which mighty queenes have grac'd in hand to take,  
And high borne ladies such esteeme did make,  
That as their daughters daughters up did grow,  
The needles art, they to the children show.  
And as 'twas then an exercise of praise,  
So what deserves more honour in these dayes,  
Than this ? which daily doth itselfe expresse  
A mortall enemy to idlenesse.  
The use of sewing is exceeding old,  
As in the sacred text it is enrolld :  
Our parents first in Paradise began,  
Who hath descended since from man to man :  
The mothers taught their daughters, sires their sons  
Thus in a line successively it runs  
For generall profit, and for recreation,  
From generation unto generation.  
With work like cherubims embroidered rare,  
The covers of the tabernacle were.  
And by the Almighty's great command, we see,  
That Aaron's garments broidered worke should be ;  
And further, God did bid his vestments should  
Be made most gay, and glorious to behold.  
Thus plainly and most truly is declar'd  
The needles worke hath still bin in regard,  
For it doth art, so like to nature frame,  
As if it were her sister, or the same.  
Flowers, plants and fishes, beasts, birds, flyes, and bees,  
Hills, dales, plaines, pastures, skies, seas, rivers, trees ;  
There's nothing neere at hand, or farthest sought,  
But with the needle may be shap'd and wrought.  
In clothes of arras I have often seene,  
Men's figur'd counterfeits so like have beene,  
That if the parties selfe had been in place,  
Yet art would vie with nature for the grace ;

Moreover, posies rare, and anagrams,  
 Signifique searching sentences from names,  
 True history, or various p'asant fiction,  
 In sundry colours mixt, with arts commixion,  
 All in dimension, ovals, squares, and rounds,  
 Arts life included within natures bounds :  
 So that art seemeth merely naturall,  
 In forming shapes so geometricall ;  
 And though our country everywhere is fild  
 With ladies, and with gentlewomen, skild  
 In this rare art, yet here they may discern  
 Some things to teach them if they list to learne.  
 And as this booke some cunning workes doth teach,  
 (Too hard for meane capacities to reach)  
 So for weake learners, other workes here be,  
 As plaine and easie as are A B C.  
 Thus skilful, or unskilful, each may take  
 This booke, and of it each good use may make,  
 All sortes of workes, almost that can be nam'd,  
 Here are directions how they may be fram'd :  
 And for this kingdomes good are hither come,  
 From the remotest parts of Christendome,  
 Collected with much paines and industrie,  
 From scorching *Spaine* and freezing *Muscovie*,  
 From fertill *France*, and pleasant *Italy*,  
 From *Poland*, *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *Germany*,  
 And some of these rare patternes have beene fet  
 Beyond the bounds of faithlesse *Mahomet* :  
 From spacious *China*, and those kingdomes East,  
 And from great *Mexico*, the Indies West.  
 Thus are these workes, *farrefetcht* and *dearely bought*,  
 And consequently *good for ladies thought*.  
 Nor doe I derogate (in any case)  
 Or doe esteeme of other teachings base,  
 For *tent worke*, *rais'd worke*, *laid worke*, *frost worke*, *net worke*,  
 Most curious *purles*, or rare *Italian cut worke*,  
 Fine *ferne stitch*, *finny stitch*, *new stitch*, and *chain stitch*,  
 Brave *bred stitch*, *Fisher stitch*, *Irish stitch*, and *Queen stitch*,  
 The *Spanish stitch*, *Rosemary stitch*, and *Mowse stitch*  
 The smarting *whip stitch*, *back stitch*, and the *crosse stitch*  
 All these are good, and these we must allow,  
 And these are everywhere in practise now :

And in this booke there are of these some store,  
With many others, never seene before.  
Here practise and invention may be free.  
And as a squirrel skips from tree to tree,  
So maids may (from their mistresse or their mother)  
Learne to leave one worke, and to learne another,  
For here they may make choice of which is which,  
And skip from worke to worke, from stitch to stitch,  
Until, in time, delightful practise shall  
(With profit) make them perfect in them all.  
Thus hoping that these workes may have this guide,  
To serve for ornament, and not for pride:  
To cherish vertue, banish idlenesse,  
For these ends, may this booke have good successe."

## CHAPTER XVII.

## TAPESTRY FROM THE CARTOONS.

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“ For, round about, the walls yclothed were  
 With goodly Arras of great majesty,  
 Woven with gold and silk so close and nere,  
 That the rich metal lurked privily,  
 As faining to be hidd from envious eye;  
 Yet here, and there, and every where unwares  
 It shew’d itselſe and shone unwillingly;  
 Like to’ a discolour’d Snake, whose hidden snares  
 Through the greene gras his long bright burnisht back declares.”

FAERIE QUEENE.

RAPHAEL, whose name is familiar to all “ as a household word,” seems to have been equally celebrated for a handsome person, an engaging address, an amiable disposition, and high talents. Language exhausts itself in his eulogy.\* But the

\* For example:—“ Egli avea tenuto sempre un contegno da guadagnarsi il cuore di tutto. Rispettoso verso il maestro, ottenne dal Papa che le sue pitture in una volta delle camere Vaticane rimanessero intatte; giusto verso i suoi emuli ringraziava Dio d’ averlo fatto nascere a’ tempi del Bonarruoti; grazioso verso i discepoli gl’ istruì e gli amò come figli; cortese anche verso gl’ ignoti, a chiunque ricorse a lui per consiglio pres’ò liberalmente l’ opera sua, e per far disegni al altrui o dar gl’ indirizzo lasciò indietro talvolta i lavori propri, non sapendo non pure di negar grazia, ma differirla.”—Lanzi, vol. ii.

Consequently when his body before interment lay in the room

extravagant encomiums of Lanzi and others must be taken in a very modified sense, ere we arrive at the rigid truth. The tone of morals in Italy “did not correspond with evangelical purity;” and Raphael’s follies were not merely permitted, but encouraged and fostered by those who sought eagerly for the creations of his pencil. His thousand engaging qualities were disfigured by a licentiousness which probably shortened his career, for he died at the early age of thirty-seven.

Great and sincere was the grief expressed at Rome for his untimely death, and no testimony of sorrow could be more affecting, more simple, or more highly honourable to its object than the placing his picture of the Transfiguration over his mortal remains in the chamber wherein he died.

which he was accustomed to paint, “Non v’ebbe sì duro artefice che a quello spettacolo non lagrimasse.”—“Ne pianse I Papa.”

Of his works:—“Le sue figure veramente amano, languiscono, temono, sperano, ardiscono; mostrano ira, placabilità, umiltà, orgoglio, come mette bene alla storia: spesso chi mira que’ volti, que’ guardi, quelle mosse, non si ricorda che ha innanzi una immagine; si sente accendere, prende partito, crede di trovarsi in sul fatto.—Tutto parla nel silenzio; ogni attore, *Il cor negli occhi e nella fronte ha scritto*; i piccioli movimenti degli occhi, degli narici, della bocca, della dita corrispondono a’ primi moti d’ogni passione; i gesti più animate più vivi ne descrivono la violenza; e ciò ch’è più, essi variano in cento modi senza uscir mai del naturale, e si attemperano a cento caratteri senza uscir mai dalla proprietà. L’eroe ha movimenti da eroe, il volgar da volgare; e quel che non descriverebbe lingua nè penna, descrive in pochissimi trath l’ingegno e l’arte di Raffaello.” p. 65.

“Il paese, gli elementi, gli animali, le fabbriche, le manifatture, ogni età dell’uomo, ogni condizione, ogni affetto, tutte comprese con la divinità del suo ingegno, tutto riduce più bello.”—p. 71.

I have thought this long extract pardonable as applied to one whose finest designs are now, through so many channels, rendered familiar to us.



It was probably within two years of the close of his short life when he was engaged by Pope Leo the Tenth to paint those cartoons which have more than all his works immortalised his name, and which render the brief hints we have given respecting him peculiarly appropriate to this work.

The cartoons were designs, from Scripture chiefly, from which were to be woven hangings to ornament the apartments of the Vatican; and their dimensions being of course proportioned to the spaces they were designed to fill, the tapestries, though equal in height, differed extremely in breadth.

The designs were,

1. The Nativity.
2. The Adoration of the Magi.
3. }
4. } The Slaughter of the Innocents.
5. }
6. The Presentation in the Temple.
7. The Miraculous Draught of Fishes.
8. St. Peter receiving the Keys.
9. The Descent of Christ into Limbus
10. The Resurrection.
11. Noli me tangere.
12. Christ at Emmaus.
13. The Ascension.
14. The Descent of the Holy Ghost.
15. The Martyrdom of St. Stephen
16. The Conversion of St. Paul.
17. Paul and Barnabas at Lystra.
18. Paul Preaching.
19. Death of Ananias.
20. Elymas the Sorcerer.

21. An earthquake ; showing the delivery of Paul and Silas from prison : named from the earthquake which shook the foundations of the building. The artist endeavours to render it ideally visible to the spectator by placing a gigantic figure, which appears to be raising the superincumbent weight on his shoulders ; but the result is not altogether successful.
22. St. Peter healing the cripple.
- 23—24. Contain emblems alluding to Leo the Tenth. These are preserved in one of the privat apartments of the Vatican palace.
25. Justice. In this subject the figures of Religion, Charity, and Justice are seen above the papal armorial bearings. The last figure gives name to the whole.

When the cartoons were finished they were sent into Flanders to be woven (at the famous manufactory at Arras) under the superintendence of Barnard Van Orlay of Brussels, and Michael Coxis, artists who had been for some years pupils of Raphael at Rome. Two sets were executed with the utmost care and cost, but the death of Raphael, the murder of the Pope, and subsequent intestine troubles seem to have delayed their appropriation. They cost seventy thousand crowns, a sum which is said to have been defrayed by Francis the First of France, in consideration of Leo's having canonised St. Francis of Paola, the founder of the Minims.

Adrian the Second was a man "alienissimo da ogni bell' arte;" an indifference which may

account for the cartoons not being sent with the tapestries to Rome, though some accounts say that the debt for their manufacture remained unliquidated, and that the paintings were kept in Flanders as security for it. They were carried away by the Spanish army in 1526-7 during the sack of Rome, but were restored by the zeal and spirit of Montmorenci the French general, as set forth in the woven borders of the tapestries Nos. 6 and 9. Pope Paul the Fourth (1555) first introduced them to the gaze of the public by exhibiting them before the Basilica of St. Peter on the festival of Corpus Domini, and also at the solemn "function of Beatification." This use of them was continued through part of the last century, and is now resumed.

In 1798 they were taken by the French from Rome and sold to a Jew at Leghorn, and one of them was burnt by him in order to extract the gold with which they were richly interwoven; but happily they did not furnish so much spoil as the speculator hoped, and this devastation was arrested. The one that was destroyed represented Christ's Descent into Limbus; the rest were repurchased for one thousand three hundred crowns, and restored to the Vatican in 1814.

We have alluded to two sets of these tapestries, and it is believed that there were two; whether *exactly* counterparts has not been ascertained. We have traced the migrations of one set. The other was, according to some authorities, presented by Pope Leo the Tenth to our Henry the Eighth; whilst others say that our king purchased it from the state of Venice. It was hung in the Banqueting

House of Whitehall, and after the unhappy execution of Charles the First, was put up, amongst other royal properties, to sale. Being purchased by the Spanish ambassador, it became the property of the house of Alva, and within a few years back was sold by the head of that illustrious house to Mr. Tupper, our consul in Spain, and by him sent back to this country.

These tapestries were then exhibited for some time in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, and were afterwards repurchased by a foreigner. Probably they have been making a "progress" throughout the kingdom, as within this twelvemonth we had the satisfaction of viewing them at the principal town in a northern county. The motto of our chapter might have been written expressly for these tapestries, so exquisitely accurate is the description as applied to them of the gold thread :—

“ As here and there, and every where unwares  
It shew'd itselſe and shone unwillingly ;  
Like to' a diſcolour'd ſnake, whoſe hidden ſnares  
Through the greene gras his long bright burniſht back declares.”

The cartoons themselves, the beautiful originals of these magnificent works, remained in the Netherlands, and were all, save seven, lost and destroyed through the ravages of time, and chance, and revolution. These seven, much injured by neglect, and almost pounced into holes by the weaver tracing his outlines, were purchased by King Charles the First, and are now justly considered a most valuable possession. It is supposed that the chief object of Charles in the purchase was to supply the then

existing tapestry manufactory at Mortlake with superior designs for imitation. Five of them were *certainly* woven there, and it is far from improbable that the remaining ones were also.\*

There was also a project for weaving them by a person of the name of James Christopher Le Blon, and houses were built and looms erected at Chelsea expressly for that purpose, but the design failed.

The "British Critic," for January, this year, has the following spirited remarks with regard to the present situation of the cartoons. "The cartoons of Raffaele are very unfairly seen in their present locale; a long gallery built for the purpose by William the Third, but in which the light enters through common chamber windows, and therefore is so much below the cartoons as to leave the greater part of them in shade. We venture to say there is no country in Europe in which such works as these—unique, and in their class invaluable—would be treated with so little honour. It has been decided by competent opinions, that their removal to London would be attended with great risk to their preservation, from the soot, damp, accumulation of dust, and other inconveniences, natural or incident to a crowded city. This, however, is no fair reason for their being shut up in their present ill-assorted apartment. There is not a petty state in Germany that would not erect a gallery on purpose for them;

\* In a priced catalogue of His Majesty's collection of "Limnings," edited by Vertue, is the following entry. "Item, in a slit box-wooden case, some TWO CARTOONS of Raphael Urbino for hangings to be made by, and the other FIVE are by the King's appointment delivered to Mr. Francis Cleen at Mortlake, to make hangings by."



and a few thousand pounds would be well bestowed in providing a fitting receptacle for some of the finest productions of human genius in art; and of the full value of which we *alone*, their possessors, seem to be comparatively insensible. Various portions of cartoons by Raffaello, part of the same series or set, exist in England; and it is far from unlikely that, were there a proper place to preserve and exhibit the whole in, these would in time, by presentation or purchase, become the property of the country, and we should then possess a monument of the greatest master of his art, only inferior to that which he has left on the walls of the Vatican."

Of all these varied and beautiful paintings, that of the Adoration of the Magi, from the variety of character and expression, the splendor and oriental pomp of the whole, the multitude of persons, between forty and fifty, the various accessories, elephants, horses, &c., with the variety of splendid and ornamental illustrations, and the exquisite grouping, is considered as the most attractive and brilliant in tapestry. As a piece of general and varied interest it may be so; but we well remember being, not so suddenly struck, as attracted and fascinated by the figure of the Christ when, after his resurrection, he is recommending the care of his flock to St. Peter. The colours have faded gradually and equably—(an advantage not possessed by the others, where some tints which have stood the ravages of time better than those around them, are in places strikingly and painfully discordant)—but in this figure the colours, though greatly faded, have yet faded so harmoniously as to add very much to the illusion, giving

to the figure really the appearance of one risen from the dead. The outline is majestic; turn which way we would, we involuntarily returned to look again. At length we mentioned our admiration to the superintendent, and the reply of the enthusiastic foreigner precluded all further remark—for nothing further could be said:—

“ Madam, I should have been astonished if you had not admired that figure: *it is itself*; it is precisely *the finest thing in the world*.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE DAYS OF "GOOD QUEEN BESS."

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"A worthie woman judge, a woman sent for staie."

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"When Fame resounds with thundring trump, which rends the  
 ratling skies,  
 And pierceth to the hautie Heavens, and thence descending  
 flies  
 Through flickering ayre: and so conjoines the sea and shore  
 together,  
 In admiration of thy grace, good Queene, thou'rt welcome  
 hither."—*The Receyving of the Queene's Maiestie into  
 hir Citie of Norwich.*

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"We may justly wonder what has become of the industry of the English ladies; we hear no more of their rich embroiderings, and curious needlework. Is all the domestic simplicity of the former ages entirely vanished?"—AIKIN.

THE age of Elizabeth presents a never-failing field of variety through which people of all tastes may delightedly rove, gathering flowers at will. The learned statesman, the acute politician, the subtle lawyer, will find in the measures of her Burleigh, her Walsingham, her Cecil, abundant food for approbation or for censure; the heroic sailor will glory

over the achievements of her time; the adventurous traveller will explore the Eldoradic regions with Raleigh, or plough the waves with Drake and Fro-bisher; the soldier will recal glorious visions of Essex and Sidney, while poesy wreathes a bay round the memory of the last, which shines freshly and bright even in the age which produced a Ben Jonson, and him "who was born with a star on his forehead to last through all time"—Shakspeare.

The age of Elizabeth was especially a learned age. The study of the dead languages had hitherto been confined almost exclusively to ecclesiastics and scholars by profession, but from the time of Henry the Seventh it had been gradually spreading amongst the higher classes. The great and good Sir Thomas More gave his daughters a learned education, and they did honour to it; Henry the Eighth followed his example; Lady Jane Grey made learning lovely; and Elizabeth's pedantry brought the habit into full fashion.

If a queen were to talk Sanscrit, her court would endeavour to do so likewise. The example of learned studies was given by the queen herself, who translated from the Greek a play of Euripides, and parts of Isocrates, Xenophon, and Plutarch; from the Latin considerable portions of Cicero, Seneca, Sallust, Horace, &c. She wrote many Latin letters, and is said to have spoken five languages with facility. As a natural consequence the nobility and gentry, their wives and daughters, became enthusiasts in the cause of letters. "The novelty which attended these studies, the eager desire to possess what had been so long studiously and jealously con

celeated, and the curiosity to explore and rifle the treasures of the Greek and Roman world, which mystery and imagination had swelled into the marvellous, contributed to excite an absolute passion for study and for books. The court, the ducal castle, and the baronial hall were suddenly converted into academies, and could boast of splendid tapestries. In the first of these, according to Ascham, might be seen the queen reading "more Greeke every day than some prebendarie of this church doth read *Latin* in a whole week;" and while she was translating Isocrates or Seneca, it may be easily conceived that her maids of honour found it convenient to praise and to adopt the disposition of her time. In the second, observes Warton, "the daughter of a duchess was taught not only to distil strong waters, but to construe Greeke; and in the third, every young lady who aspired to be fashionable was compelled, in imitation of the greater world, to exhibit similar marks of erudition."

A contemporary writer says, that some of the ladies of the court employ themselves "in continuall reading either of the holie Scriptures, or histories of our owne or forren nations about us, and diverse in writing volumes of their owne, or translating of other mens into our English and Latine toongs. I might here (he adds) make a large discourse of such honorable and grave councellers, and noble personages, as give their dailie attendance upon the queene's majestic. I could in like sort set forth a singular commendation of the vertuous beautie, or beautiful vertues of such ladies and gentlewomen as wait upon his person, betweene whose amiable



countenances and costlinesse of attire there seemeth to be such a dailie conflict and contention, as that it is verie difficult for me to gesse whether of the twaine shall beare awaie the preheminence. This further is not to be omitted, to the singular commendation of both sorts and sexes of our courtiers here in England, that there are verie few of them which have not the use and skill of sundrie speaches, beside an excellent veine of writing before-time not regarded. Would to God the rest of their lives and conversations were correspondent to these gifts! for as our common courtiers (for the most part) are the best lerned and endued with excellent gifts, so are manie of them the worst men when they come abroad, that anie man shall either heare or read of. Trulie it is a rare thing with us now to heare of a courtier which hath but his owne language. And to saie how many gentlewomen and ladies there are, that beside sound knowledge of the Greeke and Latine toongs, are thereto no lesse skilful in the Spanish, Italian, and French, or in some one of them, it resteth not in me. Sith I am persuaded, that as the noble-men and gentlemen doo surmount in this behalfe, so these come verie little or nothing at all behind them for their parts, which industrie God continue, and accomplish that which otherwise is wanting!"\*

At this time the practice (derived from the chivalrous ages, when every baronial castle was the resort of young persons of gentle birth, of both sexes) was by no means discontinued of placing young women, of gentle birth, in the establishment

\* Harrison.

of ladies of rank, where, without performing any menial offices, they might be supposed to have their own understood duties in the household, and had in return the advantage of a liberal education, and constant association with the best company. Persons of rank and fortune often retained in their service many young people of both sexes of good birth, and bestowed on them the fashionable education of the time. Indeed their houses were the best, if not then the only schools of elegant learning. The following letter, written in 1595, is from a young lady thus situated :

“ To my good mother Mrs. Pake, at Broumfield,  
deliver this.

“ DEARE MOTHER,

“ MY humble dutye remembred unto my father and you, &c. I received upon Weddensday last a letter from my father and you, whereby, I understand, it is your pleasures that I should certifie you what times I do take for my lute, and the rest of my exercises. I doe for the most part playe of my lute after supper, for then commonlie my lady heareth me; and in the morninges, after I am reddie, I play an hower; and my wrightinge and siferinge, after I have done my lute. For my drawinge I take an hower in the afternowne, and my French at night before supper. My lady hath not bene well these tooe or three dayes : she telleth me, when she is well, that she will see if Hilliard will come and teche me; if she can by any means she will, &c. &c.—As touchinge my newe corse in service, I hope I shall performe my dutye to my lady

with all care and regard to please her, and to behave myselfe to everye one else as it shall become me. Mr. Harrisone was with me upone Fridaye; he heard me playe, and brought me a dusson of trebles; I had some of him when I came to London. Thus desiring pardone for my rude writinge, I leave you to the Almightye, desiringe him to increase in you all health and happines.

“ Your obedient daughter,

“ REBECCA PAKE.”

Could any thing afford a stronger contrast to the grave and certainly severe study to which Elizabeth had habituated herself, than the vain and fantastic puerility of many of her recreations and habits,—the unintellectual brutality of the bearbaitings which she admired, or the gaudy and glittering pageants in which she delighted? She built a gallery at Whitehall at immense expense, and so superficially, that it was in ruins in her successor's time; but it was raised, in order to afford a magnificent reception to the ambassadors who, in 1581, came to treat of an alliance with the Duke of Anjou. It was framed of timber, covered with painted canvas, and decorated with the utmost gaudiness. Pendants of fruit of various kinds (amongst which cucumbers and even carrots are enumerated) were hung from festoons of flowers intermixed with evergreens, and the whole was powdered with gold spangles; the ceiling was painted like a sky with stars, sunbeams, and clouds, intermixed with scutcheons of the royal arms; and glass lustres and ornaments were scattered all around. Here were enacted masques and pageants

chiefly remarkable for their pedantic prolixity of composition, and the fulsome and gross flattery towards the queen with which they were throughout invested.

Everything, in accordance with the rage of the day, assumed an erudite, or, more truly speaking, a pedantic cast. When the queen (says Warton) paraded through a country town, almost every pageant was a pantheon. When she paid a visit at the house of any of her nobility, at entering the hall she was saluted by the Penates, and conducted to her privy chamber by Mercury. Even the pastry cooks were expert mythologists. At dinner, select transformations of Ovid's metamorphoses were exhibited in confectionary; and the splendid icing of an immense historic plum-cake was embossed with a delicious basso-relievo of the destruction of Troy. In the afternoon, when she condescended to walk in the garden, the lake was covered with Tritons and Nereids; the pages of the family were converted into wood-nymphs, who peeped from every bower; and the footmen gambolled over the lawns in the figure of satyrs.

Scarcely we think could even the effusions of Euphues—a fashion also of this period—be more wearisome to the spirit than a repetition of these dull delights.

This predilection for learning, and the time perforce given to its acquisition, must necessarily have subtracted from those hours which might otherwise have been bestowed on the lighter labours and beguiling occupations of the needle. Nor does it appear that after her accession Elizabeth did much

patronise this gentle art. She was cast in a more stirring mould. In her father's court, under her sister's jealous eye, within her prison's solitary walls, her needle might be a prudent disguise, a solacing occupation, "woman's pretty excuse for thought." But after her own accession to the throne *action* was her characteristic.

Nevertheless we are not to suppose that, because needlework was not "a rage," it was frowned upon and despised. By no means. It is perhaps fortunate that Elizabeth did not especially patronise it; for so dictatorial and absolute was she, that by virtue of the "right divine" she would have made her statesmen embroider their own robes, and her warriors lay aside the sword for the distaff. But as, happily, it now only held a secondary place in her esteem, we have Raleigh's poems instead of his sampler, and Bacon's learning instead of his stitchery. But it was not in her nature to suffer any thing in which she excelled to lie quite dormant. She was an accomplished needlewoman; some exquisite proofs of her skill were then glowing in all their freshness, and her excellence in this art was sufficiently obvious to prevent the ladies of her court from entirely forsaking it. Many books, with patterns for needlework, were published about this time, and in a later one Queen Elizabeth is especially celebrated in a laudatory poem for her skill in it. That proficiency in ornamental needlework was an absolute requisite in the accomplishments of a country belle, may be inferred from the prominent place it holds in Drayton's description of the well-



educated daughter of a country knight in Elizabeth's days :

“ The silk well couth she twist and twine,  
And make the fine march pine,  
And with the needlework :  
And she couth help the priest to say  
His mattins on a holy day,  
And sing a psalm in kirk.  
“ She wore a frock of frolic green,  
Might well become a maiden queen,  
Which seemly was to see ;  
A hood to that so neat and fine,  
In colour like the columbine,  
Ywrought full featously.”

The march pine or counterpanes here alluded to, taxed in these days to the fullest extent both the purse of the rich and the fingers of the fair. Elizabeth had several most expensively trimmed with ermine as well as needlework ; the finest and richest embroidery was lavished on them ; and it was no unusual circumstance for the counterpane for the “standing” or master’s bed to be so lavishly adorned as to be worth a thousand marks.

At no time was ornamental needlework more admired, or in greater request in the everyday concerns of life, than now. Almost every article of dress, male and female, was adorned with it. Even the boots, which at this time had immense tops turned down and fringed, and which were commonly made of russet cloth or leather, were worn by some exquisites of the day of very fine cloth (of which enough was used to make a shirt), and were embroidered in gold or silver, or in various-coloured

silks, in the figures of birds, animals, or antiques; and the ornamental needlework alone of a pair of these boots would cost from four to ten pounds. The making of a single shirt would frequently cost 10*l.*, so richly were they ornamented with "needleworke of silke, and so curiously stitched with other knackes."

"Woman's triflings," too, their handkerchiefs, reticules, workbags, &c., were decorated richly. We have seen within these few days a workbag which would startle a modern fair one, for, as far as regards *size*, it has a most "industrious look," but which, despite the ravages of near three centuries, yet gives token of much original magnificence. It is made of net, lined with silk; the material, the net itself, (a sort of honeycomb pattern, like what we called a few years ago the Grecian lace,) was made by the fair workwoman in those days, and was a fashionable occupation both in France and England. This bag is wrought in broad stripes with gold thread, and between the stripes various flowers are embroidered in different coloured silks. The bag stands in a sort of card-board basket, covered in the same style; it is drawn with long cords and tassels, and is large enough perhaps, on emergency, to hold a good sized baby.

It is more than probable that female skill was in request in various matters of household decoration. The Arras looms, indeed, had long superseded the painful fingers of notable dames in the construction of hangings for walls, which were universally used, intermingled and varied in the palaces and nobler mansions by "painted cloth," and cloth of

gold and silver. Thus Shakspeare describes Imogen's chamber in Cymbeline :

" Her bed-chamber was hanged  
With tapestry of silk and silver."

We have remarked that Henry the Eighth's palaces were very splendid; Elizabeth's were equally so, and more consistently finished in minor conveniences, as it is particularly remarked that "easye quilted and lyned formes and stools for the lords and ladyes to sit on" had superseded the "great plank forms, that two yeomen can scant remove out of their places, and waynscot stooles so hard, that since great breeches were layd asyde men can skant indewr to sitt on." Her two presence chambers at Hampton Court shone with tapestry of gold and silver, and silk of various colours; her bed was covered with costly coverlids of silk, wrought in various patterns, by the needle; and she had many "chusions," moveable articles of furniture of various shapes, answering to our large family of tabourets and ottomans, embroidered with gold and silver thread.

But it was not merely in courts and palaces that arras was used; it was now, of a coarser fabric, universally adopted in the houses of the country gentry. "The wals of our houses on the inner sides be either hanged with tapisterie, arras-work,\* or painted cloths, wherein either diverse histories, or hearbes, beasts, knots, and such like are stained,

\* From this separate mention of *tapisterie* and *arras-work* by so accurate a describer as Harrison, it would seem that tapestry of the needle alone was not, even yet, quite exploded.

or else they are seeled with oke of our owne, or wainescot brought hither out of the east countries." The tapestry was now suspended on frames, which, we may infer, were often at a considerable distance from the walls, since the portly Sir John Falstaff ensconced himself "behind the arras" on a memorable occasion; Polonius too met his death there; and indeed Shakspeare presses it into the service on numerous occasions.

The following quotation will give an accurate idea of properties thought most valuable at this time; and it will be seen that ornamental needlework cuts a very distinguished figure therein. It is a catalogue of his wealth given by Gremio when suing for Bianca to her father, who declares that the wealthiest lover will win her, in the *Taming of the Shrew*.

*Gremio.* "First, as you know, my house within the city  
Is richly furnished with plate and gold;  
Basons and ewers, to lave her dainty hands;  
My hangings all of Tyrian tapestry;  
In ivory coffers I have stuff'd my crowns;  
In cypres chests my *arras*, counterpoints,  
Costly apparel, tents, and canopies,  
Fine linen, *Turkey cushions boss'd with pearl*,  
*Valence of Venice gold, in needlework*,  
Pewter and brass, and all things that belong  
To house or house-keeping."

The age of Elizabeth was one which powerfully appeals to the imagination in various ways. The æra of warlike chivalry was past; but many of its lighter observances remained, and added to the variety of life, and perhaps tended to polish it. We

are told, for instance, that as the Earl of Cumberland stood before Elizabeth she dropped her glove; and on his picking it up graciously desired him to keep it. He caused the trophy to be encircled with diamonds; and ever after, at all tilts and tourneys, bore it conspicuously placed in front of his high crowned hat. Jousting and tilting in honour of the ladies (by whom prizes were awarded) continued still to be a favourite diversion. There were annual contentions in the lists in honour of the sovereign, and twenty-five persons of the first rank established a society of arms for this purpose, of which the chivalric Sir Henry Lee was for some time president.

The "romance of chivalry" was sinking to be succeeded by the heavier tomes of Gomberville, Scudery, &c., but the extension of classical knowledge, the vast strides in acquirement of various kinds, the utter change, so to speak, in the system of literature, all contributed to the downfall of the chivalric romance. Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* introduced a rage for high-flown pastoral effusions; and now too was re-born that taste for metaphorical effusion and spiritual romance, which was first exhibited in the fourth century in the Bishop of Tricca's romance of "Barlaam and Josaphat," and which now pervaded the fast-rising puritan party, and was afterwards fully developed in that unaccountably fascinating work, "The Pilgrim's Progress." Nevertheless, as yet

"Courtèd and caress'd,  
High placèd in hall, a welcome guest,"



the harper poured to lord and lady gay not indeed "his unpremeditated lay," but a poetical abridgment (the precursor of a fast succeeding race of romantic ballads) of the doughty deeds of renowned knights, so amply expatiated upon in the time-honoured folios of the "olden time." The wandering harper, if fallen somewhat from his "high estate," was still a recognised and welcome guest; his "matter being for the most part stories of old time, as the tale of Sir Topas, the reportes of Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwicke, Adam Bell, and Clymme of the Clough, and such other old romances or historical rhimes." Though the character of the minstrel gradually lost respectability, yet for a considerable part of Elizabeth's reign it was one so fully acknowledged, that a peculiar garb was still attached to the office.

"Mongst these, some bards there were that in their sacred rage  
Recorded the descents and acts of everie age.  
Some with their nimbler joynts that strooke the warbling string;  
In fingering some unskild, but onelie vsed to sing  
Vnto the other's harpe: of which you both might find  
Great plentie, and of both excelling in their kind."

The superstitions of various kinds, the omens, the warnings, the charms, the "potent spells" of the wizard seer, which

"Could hold in dreadful thrall the labouring moon,  
Or draw the fix'd stars from their eminence,  
And still the midnight tempest,"—

the supernatural agents, the goblins, the witches,

the fairies, the satyrs, the elves, the fauns, the  
 "shapes that walk," the

"Uncharnel'd spectres, seen to glide  
 Along the lone wood's unfrequented path"—

the being and active existence of all these was considered "true as holy writ" by our ancestors of the Elizabethan age. On this subject we will transcribe a beautifully illustrative passage from Warton:—

"Every goblin of ignorance" (says he) "did not vanish at the first glimmerings of the morning of science. Reason suffered a few demons still to linger, which she chose to retain in her service under the guidance of poetry. Men believed, or were willing to believe, that spirits were yet hovering around, who brought with them *airs from heaven, or blasts from hell*; that the ghost was duly relieved from his prison of torment at the sound of the curfew, and that fairies imprinted mysterious circles on the turf by moonlight. Much of this credulity was even consecrated by the name of science and profound speculation. Prospero had not yet *broken and buried his staff*, nor *drowned his book deeper than did ever plummet sound*. It was now that the alchemist and the judicial astrologer conducted his occult operations by the potent intercourse of some preternatural being, who came obsequious to his call, and was bound to accomplish his severest services, under certain conditions, and for a limited duration of time. It was actually one of the pretended feats of these fantastic philosophers to evoke the queen of the fairies in the solitude of a gloomy grove, who,

preceded by a sudden rustling of the leaves, appeared in robes of transcendant lustre. The Shakspeare of a more instructed and polished age would not have given us a magician darkening the sun at noon, the sabbath of the witches, and the cauldron of incantation."

It were endless, and indeed out of place here, to attempt to specify the numberless minor superstitions to which this credulous tendency of the public mind gave birth or continuation; or the marvels of travellers,—as the Anthropophagi, the Ethiops with four eyes, the Hippopodes with their nether parts like horses, the Arimaspi with one eye in the forehead, and the Monopoli who have no head at all but a face in their breast—which were all devoutly credited. One potent charm, however, we are constrained to particularise, since its infallibility was mainly dependent on the needlewoman's skill. It was a waistcoat which rendered its owner invulnerable: we believe that if duly prepared it would be found proof not only against "silver bullets," but also against even the "charmed bullet" of German notoriety. Thus runs the charm:—

"On Christmas daie at night, a thread must be sponne of flax, by a little virgine girle, in the name of the divell; and it must be by hir woven, and also *wrought with the needle*. In the brest or forepart thereof must be made *with needleworke* two heads on the head at the right side must be a hat and a long beard, and the left head must have on a crowne, and it must be so horrible that it maie resemble Belzebub; and on each side of the wastcote must be *wrought a crosse*."

The newspaper, that now mighty political engine that "thewe and sinew" of the fourth estate of the realm, took its rise in Elizabeth's day. How would her legislators have been overwhelmed with amazement could they have beheld, in dim perspective, this child of the press, scarcely less now the offspring of the imagination than those chimeras of their own time to which we have been alluding; and would not the wrinkled brow of the modern politician be unconsciously smoothened, would not the careworn and profound diplomatist "gather up his face into a smile before he was aware," if the FIRST NEWSPAPER were suddenly placed before him? It is not indeed in existence, but was published under the title of "*The English Mercurie*," in April, 1588, on the first appearance near the shores of England of the Spanish Armada, a crisis which caused this innovation on the usual public news-letter circulated in manuscript. No. 50, dated July 23, 1588, is the first now in existence; and as the publication only began in April, it shows they must have been issued frequently. We have seen this No. 50, which is preserved in the British Museum.\*

In it are no advertisements—no fashions—no law reports—no court circular—no fashionable arrivals—no fashionable intelligence—no murders—no robberies—no reviews—no crim. cons.—no elopements—no price of stocks—no mercantile intelligence—no police reports—no "leaders,"—no literary memoranda—no poets' corner—no spring meetings—no radical demonstrations—no conservative dinners—but

\* Sloane MSS. No. 4106.

" The  
" *English Mercurie*,  
" Published by AUTHORITIE,  
" For the Prevention of False Reportes,  
" *Whitehall, July 23, 1588.*"

Contains three pages and a half, small quarto, of matter of fact information.

Two pages respecting the Armada then seen " neare the Lizard, making for the entrance of the Channell," and appearing on the surface of the water " like floating castles."

A page of news from Ostend, where " nothing was talked of but the intended invasion of England. His Highnesse the Prince of Parma having compleated his preparationes, of which the subjoined Accounte might be depended upon as *exacte and authentique.*"

Something to say—for a newspaper.

And a few lines dated " London, July 13, of the lord mayor, aldermen, common councilmen, and lieutenancie of this great citie" waiting on Her Majesty with assurances of support, and receiving a gracious reception from her.

Such was the newspaper of 1588.

The great events of Elizabeth's reign, in war, in politics, in legislation, belong to the historian; the great march of mind, the connecting link which that age formed between the darkness of the preceding ones (for during the period of the wars of the Roses all sorts of art and science retrograded), and the



high cultivation of later days, it is the province of the metaphysician and philosopher to analyse; and even the lighter characteristics of the time have become so familiar through the medium of many modern and valuable works, that we have ventured only to touch very superficially on some few of the more prominent of them.

## CHAPTER XIX.

TAPESTRY OF THE SPANISH ARMADA, BETTER KNOWN  
AS TAPESTRY OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

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“ He did blow with his wind, and they were scattered.”

‘ INSCRIPTION ON THE MEDAL.’

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THE year 1588 had been foretold by astrologers to be a wonderful year, the “ climacterical year of the world ;” and the public mind of England was at that period sufficiently credulous and superstitious to be affected with vague presentiments, even if the preparation of an hostile armada so powerful as to be termed “ invincible,” had not seemed to engraft on these vague surmises too real and fearful a groundwork of truth.

The preparations of Philip II. in Spain, combined with those of the Duke of Parma in the Low Countries, and furthered by the valued and effective benediction of the shaken and tottering, but still influential and powerful head of the Roman church, had produced a hostile array which, with but too much probability of success, threatened the conquest of England, and its subjugation to the papal yoke. Not since the Norman Conquest had

any event occurred which, if successful, would be fraught with results so harassing and distressing to the established inhabitants of the island. Though the Norman Conquest had, undoubtedly, *in the course of time*, produced a beneficial and civilising and ennobling influence on the island, it was long and bitter years ere the groans of the subjugated and oppressed Anglo-Saxons had merged in the contented peacefulness of a united people.

Yet William was certainly of a severe temper, and was incited by the unquenchable opposition of the English to a cruel and exterminating policy. Philip of Spain seemed not to promise milder measures. He was a bigot, and moreover hated the English with an utter hatred. During his union with Mary he had utterly failed to gain their good will, and his hatred to them increased in an exact ratio to the failure of his desired influence with them. Neither time, nor trouble, nor care, nor expense, was spared in this his decided invasion; and it is said that from Italy, Sicily, and even America, were drafted the most experienced captains and soldiers to aid his cause. Well, then, might England look with anxiety, and even with terror, to this threatened and fast approaching event.

But her energies were fully equal to the emergency. Elizabeth, now in the full plenitude of her power, was at the acme of her influence over the wills, and in a great degree over the affections of her subjects, at least over by far the greater portion of them; one factious and discontented party there was, but too insufficient to be any effectual barrier to her designs. And the cause was a popular one:

Protestants and Romanists joined in deprecating a foreign yoke. Her powerful and commanding energies did not forsake her. Her appeal to her subjects was replied to with heart-thrilling readiness, the city of London setting a noble example; for when ministers desired from it five thousand men and fifteen ships, the lord mayor, in behalf of the city, craved their sovereign to accept of ten thousand soldiers and thirty ships.

This spirited precedent was followed all through the empire, all classes vied with each other in contributing their utmost quota of aid, by means and by personal service, and amongst many similar instances it is recorded of "that noble, vertuous, honourable man, the Viscount Montague, that he now came, though he was very sickly, and in age, with a full resolution to live and dye in defence of the queene, and of his countrie, against all invaders, whether it were pope, king, and potentate whatsoever, and in that quarrell he would hazard his life, his children, his landes and goods. And to shew his mynde agreeably thereto, he came personally himselfe before the queene, with his band of horsemen, being almost two hundred; the same being led by his owne sonnes, and with them a yong child, very comely, seated on horseback, being the heire of his house, that is, ye eldest sonne to his sonne and heire; a matter much noted of many, to see a grandfather, father, and sonne, at one time on horsebacks afore a queene for her service."

For three years had Philip been preparing, in all parts of his dominions, for this overwhelming expedition, and his equipments were fully equal to his

extensive preparations; and so popular was the project in Spain, and so ardent were its votaries, that there was not a family of any note which had not contributed some of its dearest and nearest members; there were also one hundred and eighty Capuchins, Dominicans, Jesuits, and Mendicant friars; and so great was the enthusiastic anticipation, that even females hired vessels to follow the fleet which contained those they loved; two or three of these were driven by the storm on the coast of France.

This Armada consisted of about one hundred and fifty ships, most of which were of an uncommon size, strength, and thickness, more like floating castles than anything else; and to this unwieldy size may, probably, be attributed much of their discomfiture. For the greater holiness of their action, twelve were called the Twelve Apostles; and a pinnacle of the Andalusian squadron, commanded by Don Pedro de Valdez, was called the "Holy Ghost." The fleet is said to have contained thirty-two thousand persons, and to have cost every day thirty thousand ducats.

The Duke of Parma's contemporary preparations were also prodigious, and of a nature which plainly declared the full certainty and confidence in which the invaders indulged of making good their object. But the preparations were doomed not to be even tried. The finesse and manœuvres of the shrewd Sir Francis Walsingham \* had caused the invasion

\* He contrived, by means of a Venetian priest, his spy, to obtain a copy of a letter from Philip to the Pope; a gentleman of the bed-chamber taking the keys of the cabinet from the pockets of his holiness as he slept. Upon intelligence thus obtained, Walsingham got those Spanish bills protested at Genoa which should have supplied money for the preparations.



to be retarded for a whole year, and by this time England was fully prepared for her foes. The result is known. The hollow treaty of peace into which Parma had entered in order, when all preparations were completed, to take her by surprise, was entered into with an equal share of hypocritical policy by Elizabeth. "So (says an old historian) as they seemed on both sides to sew the foxe's skin to the lion's."

So powerful was the effect on the public mind, not only of this projected enterprise, but of its almost unhoped for discomfiture, that all possible means were taken to commemorate the event. One method resorted to was the manufacture of tapestry representing a series of subjects connected with it. At that time Flanders excelled all others in the manufacture of tapestry, it was scarcely indeed introduced into England; and our ancestors had a series of ten charts, designed by Henry Cornelius Vroom, a celebrated painter of Haarlem, from which their Flemish neighbours worked beautiful draperies, which ornamented the walls of the House of Lords.

At the time of the Union with Ireland, when considerable repairs and alterations were made here, these magnificent tapestries were taken down, cleaned, and replaced, with the addition of large frames of dark stained wood, which set off the work and colouring to advantage. They formed a series of ten pictures, round which portraits of the distinguished officers who commanded the fleet were wrought into a border.

With a prescience, which might now almost seem prophetic, Mr. John Pine, engraver, published in

1739 a series of plates taken from these tapestries ; and "because," says he, "time, or accident, or moths may deface these valuable shadows, we have endeavoured to preserve their likeness in the preceding prints, which, by being multiplied and dispersed in various hands, may meet with that security from the closets of the curious, which the originals must scarce always hope for, even from the sanctity of the place they are kept in."

"On the 17th day of July, 1588, the English discovered the Spanish fleet with lofty turrets like castles, in front like a half moon, the wing thereof spreading out about the length of seven miles, sailing very slowly, though with full sails, the winds being as it were tired with carrying them, and the ocean groaning under the weight of them."

This forms the subject of the first tableau. The English commanders suffered the Spaniards to pass them unmolested, in order that they might hang upon their rear, and harass them when they should be involved in the Channel ; for the English navy were unable to confront such a power in direct and close action. The second piece represents them thus, near Fowey, the English coast displayed in the back-ground, diversified perhaps somewhat too elaborately into hill and dale, and the foliage scattered somewhat too regularly in lines over each hill, but very pretty nevertheless. A small village with its church and spire appears just at the water edge, Eddystone lighthouse lifts its head above the waters, and, fit emblem of the patriotism which now burned throughout the land, and even glowed on the waters, a huge sea monster uprears itself in threatening

attitude against the invading host, and shows a countenance hideous enough to scare any but Spaniards from its native shores.

No. 3 represents the first engagement between the hostile fleets, and also the subsequent sailing of the Spanish Armada up the channel, Closely followed by the English, whose ships were so much lighter, that in a running warfare of this kind they had greatly the advantage. The sea is alive too with dolphins and other strange fish, with right British hearts, as it has been said that "they seemed to oppose themselves with fierce and grim looks to the progress of the Spanish fleet." The view of the coast here is very good; and, where it retires from Start Point so as to form a bay or harbour, the perspective is really admirably indicated by two vessels dimly defined in the horizon.

The views of the coast are varied and interesting; and the distances and perspective views are much more accurately delineated than was usual at the time; but, as we have remarked, they were designed by an eminent painter, and one whose particular *forte* was the delineation of shipping and naval scenes.

The pictures are certainly as a series devoid of variety. In two of them the Calais shore is introduced; and the intermixture of fortifications, churches, houses, and animated spectators, eagerly crowding to behold the fleets sailing by, produces an enlivening and busy scene, which, set off by the varied, lively, and appropriate colouring of the tapestry, would have a most striking effect. But the man who, unmoved by the excitement about him, is

calmly fishing under the walls, without even turning his head toward the scene of tumult, must be blessed with an apathy of disposition which the poor enraged dolphins and porpoises might have envied.

With these exceptions the tapestries are all sea pieces with only a distant view of the coast, and portray the two fleets in different stages of their progress, sometimes with engagements between single ships, but generally in an apparent state of truce, the English always the pursuers, and the Spaniards generally drawn up in form of a crescent. The last however shows the invading fleet hurriedly and in disorder sailing away, when bad weather, the Duke of Parma's delay, and a close engagement of fourteen hours, in which they "suffered grievously," having "had to endure all the heavy cannonading of their triumphant opponents, while they were struggling to get clear of the shallows," convinced them of the impossibility of a successful close to their enterprise, and made them resolve to take advantage of a southern breeze to make their passage up the North sea, and round Scotland home.

" He that fights and runs away,  
May live to fight another day."

So, however, did *not* the Spaniards. "About these north islands their mariners and soldiers died daily by multitudes, as by their bodies cast on land did appear. The Almighty ordered the winds to be so contrary to this proud navy, that it was, by force, dissevered on the high seas west upon Ireland; and so great a number of them driven into sundry dangerous bays, and upon rocks, and there cast

away ; some sunk, some broken, some on the sands, and some burnt by the Spaniards themselves."

Misfortune clung to them ; storm and tempest on the sea, and inhospitable and cruel treatment when they were forced on shore so reduced them, that of this magnificent Armada only sixty shattered vessels found their home ; and their humbled commander, the Duke de Medina Sidonia, was led to understand that his presence was not desired at court, and that a private country residence would be the most suitable.

It was on this occasion, when the instant danger was past but by no means entirely done away, as for some time it was supposed that the Armada, after recruiting in some northern station, would return, that Elizabeth with a general's truncheon in her hand rode through the ranks of her army at Tilbury, and addressed them in a style which caused them to break out into deafening and tumultuous shouts and cries of love, and honour, and obedience to death. Thus magnificently the English heroine spoke :

"My loving People,—We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed Multitudes ; but I assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving People. Let Tyrants fear ; I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal Hearts and Goodwill of my Subjects ; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see at this time, not for my Recreation and Disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the Battle, to live and die amongst



you all ; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and for my People, my Honour, and my Blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble Woman, but I have the Heart and Stomach of a King, and of a King of England too ; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any Prince of Europe should dare to invade the Borders of my Realm ; to which, rather than any Dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up Arms, I myself will be your General, Judge, and Rewarder of every one of your Virtues in the Field ; I know already, for your forwardness, you have deserved Rewards and Crowns ; and we do assure you, in the word of a Prince, they shall be duly paid you. In the mean time my Lieutenant-general shall be in my stead, than whom never Prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject ; not doubting but, by your obedience to my General, by your Concord in the camp, and your Valour in the Field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over those Enemies of my God, of my Kingdoms, and of my People."

✓ The tapestry, the magnificent memorial of this great event, was lost irreparably in the devastating fire of 1834. Some fragments, it is said, were preserved, but we have not been able to ascertain this fact. One portion still exists at Plymouth, though shorn of its pristine brilliancy, as some of the silver threads were drawn out by the economists of the time of the Commonwealth. This piece was cut out to make way for a gallery at the time of the trial of Queen Caroline, was secreted by a German servant of the Lord Chamberlain, and sold by him to a broker who offered it to Government for 500*l*.

Some inquiry was made into the circumstances, which, however, do not seem to have excited very great interest, since the relic was ultimately bought by the Bishop of Landaff (Van Mildert) for 20*l*. By him it was presented to the corporation of Plymouth, who still possess it.

## CHAPTER XX.

## ON STITCHERY.

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“ Here have I cause in men just blame to find,  
 That in their proper praise too partial bee,  
 And not indifferent to womankind,

\* \* \* \* \*

Scarse do they spare to one, or two, or three,  
 Rowme in their writtes ; yet the same writing small  
 Does all their deedes deface, and dims their glories all.”

*Faerie Queene.*

“ Christine, whiche understode these thynges of Dame Reason, replied upon that in this manere. Madame Ise wel y<sup>t</sup> ye myght fynde ynowe & of grete nombre of women praysed in scyences and in crafte ; but knowe ye ony that by y<sup>e</sup> vertue of their felynge & of subtylte of wytte *haue founde of themselfe* ony newe craftes and scyences necessary, good, & couenable that were neuer founde before nor knowne ? for it is not so grete maystry to folowe and to lerne after ony other scyence founde and comune before, as it is to fynde of theymselve some newe thyng not accustomed before.

“ *Answer.*—Ne doubte ye not y<sup>e</sup> contrary my dere frende but many craftes and scyences ryght notable hathe ben founde by the wytte and subtylte of women, as moche by speculacyon of understandinge, the whiche sheweth them by wrytynge, as in craftes, y sheweth theym *in werkyng of handes* & of labour.”

*The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes.*

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AGAIN we must lament that the paucity of historical record lays us under the necessity of concluding, by inference, what we would fain have displayed by

direct testimony. The respectable authority quoted above affirms that "many craftes and scyences ryght notable hathe ben founde by the wytte and subtylte of women," and it specifies particularly "werkynge of handes," by which we suppose the "talented" author means needlework. That the necessity for this pretty art was first created by woman, no one, we think, will disallow; and that it was first practised, as it has been subsequently perfected, by her, is a fact of which we feel the most perfect conviction.

This conviction has been forced upon us by a train of reasoning which will so readily suggest itself to the mind of all our readers, that we content ourselves with naming the result, assured that it is unnecessary to trouble them with the intervening steps. One only link in the chain of "circumstantial evidence" will we adduce, and that is afforded by the ancient engraving to which we have before alluded in our remarks upon Eve's needle and thread. There whilst our "general mother" is stitching away at the fig-leaves in the most edifying manner possible, our "first father," far from trying to "put in a stitch for himself," is gazing upon her in the most utter amazement. And while she plies her busy task as if she had been born to stitchery, his eyes, *not* his fingers,

"Follow the nimble fingers of the fair,"

with every indication of superlative wonder and admiration.

In fact, it is no slight argument in favour of the original invention of sewing by women, that men very rarely have wit enough to learn it, even when

invented. There has been no lack of endeavour, even amongst the world's greatest and mightiest, but poor "work" have they made of it. Hercules lost all the credit of his mighty labours from his insignificance at the spinning wheel, and the sceptre of Sardanapalus passed from his grasp as he was endeavouring to "finger the fine needle and nyse thread."

These love-stricken heroes might have said with Gower—had he then said it—

"What things she bid me do, I do,  
And where she bid me go, I go.  
And where she likes to call, I come,  
I serve, I bow, I look, I lowte,  
My eye followeth her about.  
What so she will, so will I,  
When she would set, I kneel by.  
And when she stands, then will I stand,  
*And when she taketh her work in hand,*  
*Of wevyng or of embroidrie.*  
Then can I *only* muse and prie,  
Upon her fingers long and small."

Our modern Hercules, the Leviathan of literature, was not more successful.

*Dr. Johnson.*—"Women have a great advantage that they may take up with little things, without disgracing themselves; a man cannot, except with fiddling. Had I learnt to fiddle I should have done nothing else."

*Boswell.*—"Pray, Sir, did you ever play on any musical instrument?"

*Dr. Johnson.*—"No, Sir; I once bought a flageolet, but I never made out a tune."

*Boswell.*—"A flageolet, Sir! So small an instrument? I should have liked to hear you play on the



violoncello. *That* should have been your instrument."

*Dr. Johnson.*—"Sir, I might as well have played on the violoncello as another; but I should have done nothing else. No, Sir; a man would never undertake great things could he be amused with small. I once tried knotting; Dempster's sister undertook to teach me, but *I could not learn it.*"

*Boswell.*—"So, Sir; it will be related in pompous narrative, 'once for his amusement he tried knotting, nor did this Hercules disdain the distaff.'"

*Dr. Johnson.*—"Knitting of stockings is a good amusement. As a freeman of Aberdeen, I should be a knitter of stockings."

Nor was Dr. Johnson singular in his high appreciation of the value of some sort of stitchery to his own half of the human race, if their intellects unfortunately had not been too obtuse for its acquisition. The great censor of the public morals and manners a century ago, the *Spectator*, recommends the same thing, though with his usual policy he feigns merely to be the medium of another's advice.

"Mr. Spectator,—You are always ready to receive any useful hint or proposal, and such, I believe, you will think one that may put you in a way to employ the most idle part of the kingdom; I mean that part of mankind who are known by the name of the women's men, beaux, &c. Mr. Spectator, you are sensible these pretty gentlemen are not made for any manly employments, and for want of business are often as much in the vapours as the ladies. Now what I propose is this, that since knot-

ting is again in fashion, which has been found a very pretty amusement, that you will recommend it to these gentlemen as something that may make them useful to the ladies they admire. And since it is not inconsistent with any game or other diversion, for it may be done in the playhouse, in their coaches, at the tea-table, and, in short, in all places where they come for the sake of the ladies (except at church, be pleased to forbid it there to prevent mistakes), it will be easily complied with. It is besides an employment that allows, as we see by the fair sex, of many graces, which will make the beaux more readily come into it; and it shows a white hand and a diamond ring to great advantage; it leaves the eyes at full liberty to be employed as before, as also the thoughts and the tongue. In short, it seems in every respect so proper that it is needless to urge it further, by speaking of the satisfaction these male knotters will find when they see their work mixed up in a fringe, and worn by the fair lady for whom, and with whom, it was done. Truly, Mr. Spectator, I cannot but be pleased I have hit upon something that these gentlemen are capable of; for it is sad so considerable a part of the kingdom (I mean for numbers) should be of no manner of use. I shall not trouble you further at this time, but only to say, that I am always your reader and generally your admirer. C. B.

“ P.S.—The sooner these fine gentlemen [are set to work the better; there being at this time several fringes that stay only for more hands.”

But, alsa! the sanguine writer was mistaken in

supposing that at last gentlemen had found a something “of which they were capable.” The days of knotting passed away before they had made any proficiency in it; nor have we ever heard that they have adopted any other branch or stitch of this extensive art. There is variety enough to satisfy anybody, and there are gradations enough in the stitches to descend to any capacity but a man’s. There are tambour stitch—satin—chain—finny—new—bréd—ferne—and queen-stitches; there is slabbing—veining—and button stitch; seed-ing—roping—and open stitch: there is sockseam—herring-bone—long stitch—and cross stitch: there is rosemary stitch—Spanish stitch—and Irish stitch: there is back stitch—overcast—and seam stitch: hemming—felling—and basting: darning—grafting—and patching: there is whip stitch—and fisher stitch: there is fine drawing—gathering—marking—trimming—and tucking.

Truly all this does require some *vous*, and the lords of the creation are more to be pitied than blamed for that paucity of intellect which deprives them of “woman’s pretty excuse for thought.”

Raillery apart, sewing is in itself an agreeable occupation, it is essentially a useful one; in many of its branches it is quite ornamental, and it is a gentle, a graceful, an elegant, and a truly feminine occupation. It causes the solitary hours of domestic life to glide more smoothly away, and in those social unpretending reunions which in country life and in secluded districts are yet not abolished, it takes away from the formality of sitting for conversation, abridges the necessity for scandal, or, to say the least

of it, as we have heard even ungallant lordly man allow, it keeps us out of mischief.

And there are frequent and oft occurring circumstances which invest it with characteristics of a still higher order. How many of "the sweet solitudes that life beguile" are connected with this interesting occupation! either in preparing habiliments for those dependent on our care, and for love of whom many an unnecessary stitch which may tend to extra adornment is put in; or in those numberless pretty and not unuseful tokens of remembrance, which, passing from friend to friend, soften our hearts by the intimation they convey, that we have been cared for in our absence, and that while the world looked dark and desolate about us, unforgetting hearts far, far away were holding us in remembrance, busy fingers were occupied in our behoof. Oh! a reticule, a purse, a slipper, how valueless soever in itself, is, when fraught with these home memories, worth that which the mines of Golconda could not purchase. And of such a nature would be the feelings which suggested these well-known but exquisite lines:—

" The twentieth year is well nigh past,  
Since first our sky was overcast,  
Ah, would that this might be the last!  
My Mary!

' Thy spirits have a fainter flow,  
I see thee daily weaker grow,  
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,  
My Mary!

" Thy needles, once a shining store,  
For my sake restless heretofore,  
Now rust disused and shine no more,  
My Mary!

“ For though thou gladly would'st fulfil  
The same kind office for me still,  
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,  
My Mary !

“ But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,  
And all thy threads with magic art,  
Have wound themselves about this heart,  
My Mary !”

An interesting circumstance connected with needle-work is mentioned in the delightful memoir written by lady Murray, of her mother, the excellent and admirable Lady Grisell Baillie. The allusion itself is very slight, merely to the making of a frill or a collar ; but the circumstances connected with it are deeply interesting, and place before us a vivid picture of the deprivations of a family of rank and consequence in “troublesome times,” and moreover offer us a portrait from *real life* of true feminine excellence, of a young creature of rank and family, of cultivated and refined tastes and of high connexions, utterly forgetting all these in the cheerful and conscientious discharge, for years, of the most arduous and humble duties, and even of menial and revolting offices. It may be that my readers all are not so well acquainted with this little book as ourselves, and, if so, they will not consider the following extract too long.

“ They lived three years and a half in Holland, and in that time she made a second voyage to Scotland about business. Her father went by the borrowed name of Dr. Wallace, and did not stir out for fear of being discovered, though who he was, was no secret to the wellwishers of the revolution. Their



great desire was to have a good house, as their greatest comfort was at home; and all the people of the same way of thinking, of which there were great numbers, were continually with them. They paid for their house what was very extravagant for their income, nearly a fourth part; they could not afford keeping any servant, but a little girl to wash the dishes.

“All the time they were there, there was not a week that my mother did not sit up two nights, to do the business that was necessary. She went to market, went to the mill to have the corn ground, which it seems is the way with good managers there, dressed the linen, cleaned the house, made ready the dinner, mended the children’s stockings and other clothes, made what she could for them, and, in short, did everything.

“Her sister, Christian, who was a year or two younger, diverted her father and mother and the rest who were fond of music. Out of their small income they bought a harpsichord for little money, but is a *Rucar* now in my custody, and most valuable. My aunt played and sang well, and had a great deal of life and humour, but no turn to business. Though my mother had the same qualifications, and liked it as well as she did, she was forced to drudge; and many jokes used to pass betwixt the sisters about their different occupations. Every morning before six my mother lighted her father’s fire in his study, then waked him (she was ever a good sleeper, which blessing, among many others, she inherited from him); then got him, what he

usually took as soon as he got up, warm small beer with a spoonful of bitters in it, which he continued his whole life, and of which I have the receipt.

“ Then she took up the children and brought them all to his room, where he taught them everything that was fit for their age ; some Latin, others French, Dutch, geography, writing, reading, English, &c. ; and my grandmother taught them what was necessary on her part. Thus he employed and diverted himself all the time he was there, not being able to afford putting them to school ; and my mother, when she had a moment’s time, took a lesson with the rest in French and Dutch, and also diverted herself with music. I have now a book of songs of her writing when there ; many of them interrupted, half-writ, some broke off in the middle of a sentence. She had no less a turn for mirth and society than any of the family, when she could come at it without neglecting what she thought more necessary.

“ Her eldest brother, Patrick, who was nearest her age, and bred up together, was her most dearly beloved. My father was there, forfeited and exiled, in the same situation with themselves. She had seen him for the first time in the prison with his father, not long before he suffered ;\* and from that time their hearts were engaged. Her brother and my father were soon got in to ride in the Prince of Orange’s Guards, till they were better provided for in the army, which they were before the Revolution. They took their turn in standing sentry at the Prince’s gate, but always contrived to do it together,

\* She was then a mere child, not more, if I remember rightly, than twelve years old.

and the strict friendship and intimacy that then began, continued to the last.

“Though their station was then low, they kept up their spirits; the prince often dined in public, then all were admitted to see him: when any pretty girl wanted to go in they set their halberts across the door and would not let her pass till she gave each of them a kiss, which made them think and call them very pert soldiers. I could relate many stories on this subject; my mother could talk for hours and never tire of it, always saying it was the happiest part of her life. Her *constant attention was to have her brother appear right in his linen and dress*; they wore little point cravats and cuffs, which many a night she sat up to have in as good order for him as any in the place; and one of their greatest expenses was in dressing him as he ought to be.

“As their house was always full of the unfortunate people banished like themselves, they seldom went to dinner without three, four, or five of them to share it with them; and many a hundred times I have heard her say she could never look back upon their manner of living there without thinking it a miracle. They had no want, but plenty of everything they desired, and much contentment, and always declared it the most pleasing part of her life, though they were not without their little distresses; but to them they were rather jokes than grievances. The professors and men of learning in the place came often to see my grandfather; the best entertainment he could give them was a glass of alabast beer, which was a better kind of ale than common. He sent his son Andrew, the late Lord Kimmerg-

hame, a boy, to draw some for them in the cellar, and he brought it up with great diligence, but in the other hand the spigot of the barrel. My grandfather said, 'Andrew! what is that in your hand?' When he saw it he ran down with speed, but the beer was all run out before he got there. This occasioned much mirth, though perhaps they did not well know where to get more.

"It is the custom there to gather money for the poor from house to house, with a bell to warn people to give it. One night the bell came, and no money was there in the house but a orkey, which is a doit, the smallest of all coin; everybody was so ashamed no one would go to give it, it was so little, and put it from one to the other: at last my grandfather said, "Well, then, I'll go with it; we can do no more than give all we have." They were often reduced to this by the delay of the ships coming from Scotland with their small remittances; then they put the little plate they had (all of which they carried with them) in the lumber, which is pawning it, till the ships came: and that very plate they brought with them again to Scotland, and left no debt behind them."

This is a long but not an uninteresting digression, and we were led to it from the recollection that Lady Grisell Baillie, when encompassed with heavy cares, not only sat up a night or two every week, but felt a satisfaction, a pleasure, in doing so, to execute the needlework required by her family. And when sewing with a view to the comfort and satisfaction of others, the needlewoman—insignificant as the details of her employment may ap

pear—has much internal satisfaction ; she has a definite vocation, an important function.

Nor few nor insignificant are her handmaidens, one or other of whom is ever at her side, inspiring her to her task. Her most constant attendant is a matron of stayed and sober appearance, called UTILITY. The needlewoman's productions are found to vary greatly, and this variation is ascribed with truth to the influencing suggestions of the attendant for the time being.

Thus, for instance, when Utility is her companion all her labours are found to result in articles of which the material is unpretending, and the form simple ; for however she may be led wandering by the vagaries of her other co-mates, it is always found that in moments of steady reflection she listens with the most implicit deference to the intimations of this her experienced and most respectable friend.

But occasionally, indeed frequently, Utility brings with her a fair and interesting relative, called TASTE ; a gentle being, of modest and retiring mien, of most unassuming deportment, but of exquisite grace ; and it is even observed that the needlewoman is more happy in her labours, and more universally approved when accompanied by these two friends, than by any other of the more eccentric ones who occasionally take upon themselves to direct her steps.

Of these latter, FASHION is one of her most frequent visitors, and it is very often found that as she approaches Utility and Taste retire. This is not, however, invariably the case. Sometimes the three agree cordially together, and their united suffrages



and support enhance the fame of the needlewoman to the very highest pitch ; but this happy cordiality is of infrequent occurrence, and usually of short duration. Fashion is fickle, varying, inconstant ; given to sudden partialities and to disruptions unlooked for, and as sudden. She laughs to scorn Utility's grave maxims, and exaggerates the graceful suggestions of Taste until they appear complete caricatures. Consequently they, offended, retire ; and Fashion, heedless, holds on her own course, keeping the needlewoman in complete subjection to her arbitrary rule, which is often enforced in her transient absence by her own peculiar friend and intimate—CAPRICE. This fantastic being has the greatest influence over Fashion, who having no staple character of her own, is easily led every way at the beck of this whimsical and absurd dictator. The productions which emanate from the hands of the needlewoman under their guidance are much sought for, much looked at, but soon fall into utter contempt.

But there is another handmaiden created for the delight and solace of mankind in general, and who from the earliest days, even until now, has been the loving friend of the needlewoman ; ever whispering suggestions in her ear, or tracing patterns on her work, or gently guiding her finger through the fantastic maze. She is of the most exquisite beauty : fragile in form as the gossamer that floats on a summer's breath—brilliant in appearance as the colours that illumine the rainbow. So light, that she floats on an atom ; so powerful that she raises empires, nay, the whole earth by her might. Her habits

are the most vagrant imaginable; she is indeed the veriest little gossip in creation, but her disposition to roam is not more boundless than her power to gratify it.

One instant she is in the depths of the ocean, loitering upon coral beds; the next above the stars, revelling in the immensity of space; one moment she tracks a comet in his course, the next hobnobs with the sea-king, or foots a measure with mermaids. A most skilful architect, she will build palaces on the clouds radiant with splendour and beautiful as herself; then, demolishing them with a breath, she flies to some moss-grown ruin of the earth, where a glimpse of her countenance drives away the bat and the owl; the wallflower, the moss, and the ivy, are displaced by the rose, the lily, and the myrtle; the damp building is clothed in freshness and splendour, the lofty halls resound with the melody of the lute and the harp, and the whole scene is vivid with light and life, with brilliancy and beauty. Again, in an instant, all is mute, and dim, and desolate, and the versatile sorceress is hunting the otter with an Esquimaux; or, pillowed on roses whose fragrance is wafted by softest zephyrs around, she listens to the strain which the Bulbul pours; or, wrapped in deepest maze of philosophic thought, she “treads the long extent of backward time,” by the gigantic sepulchres of Egyptian kings; or else she flies “from the tempest-rocked Hebrides or the ice-bound Northern Ocean—from the red man’s wilderness of the west—from the steppes of Central Asia—from the teeming swamps of the Amazon—from the sirocco deserts of Africa—from the tufted islands

of the Pacific—from the heaving flanks of *Ætna*—or from the marbled shores of Greece;”—and draws the whole circle of her enchantments round the needlewoman’s fingers, within the walls of an humble English cottage.

But it were equally unnecessary and useless to dilate on her fairy wanderings. Suffice it to say that so great is the beneficent liberality of this fascinating being, that every corner of her rich domain is open to the highest or lowest of mortals without reserve; and so lovely is she herself, and so bewitching is her company, that few, few indeed, are they who do not cherish her as a bosom friend and as the dearest of companions.

Bearing, however, her vagrant characteristics in mind, we shall not be surprised at the peculiar ideas some people entertain of her haunts, nor at the strange places in which they search for her person. One would hardly believe that hundreds of thousands have sought her through the smoke, din, and turmoil of those lines “where all antipathies to comfort dwell,”—the railroads; while others, more adventurous, plough the ocean deep, scale the mighty mountains, or soar amid the clouds for her; or, strange to say, have sought her in the battle field ’mid scenes of bloody death. Like Hotspur, such would pluck her—

“From the pale-faced moon;

or would

“Dive into the bottom of the deep,

Where fathom-line could never touch the ground”

for her.

But she is a lady before whom strength and pride

fall nerveless and abased ; her gracious smiles are to be wooed, not commanded ; her bright presence may be won, not forced ;

“ For spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright,  
She glides o’er the earth like an angel of light.”

Possessing all the gentleness of her mother—*Taste*, she shrinks from everything rude or abrupt ; and when, as has frequently been the case, persons have attempted to lay violent hands upon her, she has invariably eluded their vigilance, by leaving in her place, tricked out in her superabundant ornaments to blind them, her half-brother—*Whim*, who sprang from the same father—*Wit*, but by another mother—*Humour*. She herself, wanderer as she is, is not without her favourite haunts, in which she lingers as if even loath to quit them at all.

Finally, wherever yet the *accomplished* needle-woman has been found, in the Jewish tabernacle of old—in the Grecian dome where the “ Tale of Troy divine ” glowed on the canvass—or in the bower of the high-born beauty of the “ bright days of the sword and the lance ”—in the cell of the pale recluse—or in the turretted prison of the royal captive—there has FANCY been her devoted friend, her inseparable companion.

## CHAPTER XXI.

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‘LES ANCIENNES TAPISSERIES;’ TAPESTRY OF ST. MARY’S HALL, COVENTRY; TAPESTRY OF HAMPTON COURT.

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“There is a sanctity in the past.”—BULWER.

ALL monuments of antiquity are so speedily passing away, all traces of those bygone generations on which the mind loves to linger, and which in their dim and indistinct memories exercise a spell, a holy often, and a purifying spell on the imagination are so fleeting, and when *irrevocably* gone will be so lamented—that all testimonies which throw certain light on the habits and manners of the past, how slight soever the testimonies they afford, how trivial soever the characteristics they display, are of the highest possible value to an enlightened people, who apply the experience of the past to its legitimate and noblest use, the guidance and improvement of the present.

In this point of view the work which forms the subject of this chapter\* assumes a value which its intrinsic worth—beautiful as is its execution—would

\* “Les Anciennes Tapisseries Historiées, ou Collection des Monumens les plus remarquables, de ce genre, qui nous soient restés du moyen age.” A Paris.



not impart to it; and it is thus rendered not less valuable as an historical record, than it is attractive as a work of taste.

“ La chez eux, (we quote from the preface to the work itself,) c'est un siège ou un tournoi; ici un festin, plus loin une chasse; et toujours, chasse, festin, tournoi, siège, tout cela est *pourtraict au vif*, comme aurait dit Montaigne, tout cela nous retrace au naturel la vie de nos pères, nous montre leurs châteaux, leurs églises, leurs costumes, leurs armes et même, grâce aux légendes explicatives, leur langage à diverses époques. Il y a mieux. Si nous nous en rapportons à l'inventaire de Charles V., exécuté en 1379, toute la littérature française des siècles féconds qui précéderent celui de ce sage monarque, aurait été par ces ordres traduite en laine.”

This book consists of representations of all the existing ancient tapestries which activity and research can draw from the hiding-places of ages, copied in the finest outline engraving, with letter-press descriptions of each plate. They are published in numbers, and in a style worthy of the object. We do not despair of seeing this spirited example followed in our own country, where many a beautiful specimen of ancient tapestry, still capable of renovation by care—is mouldering unthought of in the lumber-rooms of our ancient mansions.

We have seen twenty-one numbers of this work, with which we shall deal freely: excepting, however, the eight parts which are entirely occupied by the Bayeux Tapestry. Our own chapters on the subject were written before we were fortunate enough to obtain a sight of these, which include the whole

of the correspondence on the tapestry to which we in our sketch alluded.

LA TAPISSERIE DE NANCY—"aurait une illustre origine, et remonterait à une assez haute antiquité. Prise dans la tente de Charles le Temeraire, lors de la morte de ce prince, en 1477, devant la capitale de la Lorraine, qu'il assiegeait, elle serait devenue un meuble de la couronne, et aurait servi au palais des ducs de ce pays, depuis René 2 jusqu'à Charles IV. —C'est une de ces anciennes tapisseries flamandes dont le tissu, de laine tres fine, est éclairé par l'or et la soie. La soie et la laine subsistent encore, mais l'or ne s'aperçoit plus que dans quelques endroits et à la faveur d'un beau soleil. Nous ferons remarquer que le costume des divers personnages que figurent dans notre monument est tout à fait caracteristique. Ce sont bien là les vêtements et les ornements en usage vers la moitié du quinzième siècle, et la disposition artistique, le choix du sujet, ainsi que l'exécution elle-même portent bien l'empreinte du style des œuvres de 1450 environ.—La maison de Bourgogne était fort riche en joyaux, en vaisselle d'or ou d'argent et en *tapis*."

The tapestry presents an allegorical history, of which the object is to depict the inconveniences consequent on what is called "good cheer." Later on this formed the subject of "a morality." Originally this tapestry was only one vast page, the requisite divisions being wrought in the form of ornamented columns. It was afterwards cut in pieces, and unfortunately the natural divisions of the subject were not attended to in the severment. More unhappily still the pieces have since been rejoined in a wrong

order; and after every possible endeavour to read them aright, the publishers are indebted to the "Morality" before referred to, which was taken from it, and was entitled "La Nef de Santé, avec le gouvernail du corps humain, et la condamnation des banquetz, a la louenge de Diepte et Sobriété, et la Traictie des Passions de l'ame."

Banquet, Bonnecompagnie, Souper, Gourmandise, Friandise, Passetemps, Je pleige d'autant, Je boy à vous, and other rare personifications, not forgetting that indispensable guest *then* in all courtly pastime, Le fol, "go it" to their hearts' content, until they are interrupted *vi et armis* by a ghastly phalanx in powerful array of Apoplexie, Ydropsie, Epilencie, Pleurisie, Esquinancie, Paralasie, Gravelle, Colicque, &c.

TAPISSERIE DE DIJON.—"On conviendra qu'il serait difficile de trouver un monument de ce genre plus fidèle sur le rapport historique, plus intéressant pour les arts, et plus digne d'être reproduit par la gravure. Je ferai en outre remarquer combien cet immense tableau de laine, qui est unique, renferme de détails précieux à la fois pour la panoplie, pour les costumes, et l'architecture du commencement du 16 siècle, ainsi que pour l'histoire monumentale de Dijon."

This tapestry, judging by the engravings in the work we quote, must be very beautiful. The groups are spirited and well disposed; and the countenances have so much *nature* and expression in them, as to lead us readily to credit the opinion of the writer that they were portraits. The buildings are well outlined; and in the third piece an excellent

effect is produced by exposing—by means of an open window, or some simple contrivance of the sort—part of the interior of the church of Notre Dame, and so displaying the brave leader of the French army, La Tremouille, as he offers thanks before the shrine of the Virgin.

The tapestry was worked immediately after the siege of Dijon, (1513) and represents in three scenes the most important circumstances relating to it; the costumes, the arms, and the architecture of the time being displayed with fidelity and exactitude. The first represents the invading army before the walls; the second a solemn procession in honour of Notre-Dame-de-Bonne-Espoir. In the midst is elevated the image of the Virgin, which is surrounded by the clergy in their festal vestments, by the religious communities, by the nobility, the bourgeois, and the military, all bearing torches.

To this solemn procession was attributed the truce which led to a more lasting peace, though there are some heterodox dissentients who attribute this substantial advantage to the wisdom and policy of the able commander La Tremouille, who shared with Bayard the honourable distinction of being “sans peur et sans reproche.”

TAPISSERIES DE BAYARD.—A château which belonged to this noted hero was despoiled at the Revolution, and it was doubtless only owing to an idea of its worthlessness that some of the ancient tapestry was left there. These fragments, in a deplorable state, were purchased in 1807, and there are yet sufficient of them to bear testimony to their former magnificence, and to decide the date of their

creation at the close of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century. The subjects are taken from Homer's "Iliad," and "il est probable (says M. Jubinal) que ce poëme se trouvait originairement reproduit en laine presque tout entier, malgré sa longueur, car ce n'était pas le travail qui effrayait nos aïeux."

Valenciennes was celebrated for the peculiar fineness and gloss of its tapestry. By the indefatigable industry of certain antiquarians, some pieces in good preservation representing a tournament, have lately been taken from a garret, dismantled of their triple panoply of dust, cleaned and hung up; after being traced from their original abode in the state apartments of a prince through various gradations, to the damp walls of a registry office, where, from their apparent fragility alone, they escaped being cut into floor mats.

Those of the CHATEAU D'HAROUÉ, and of the COLLECTION DUSOMMERARD, are also named here; but there is little to say about them, as the subjects are more imaginary than historical. They are of the sixteenth century, representing scenes of the chase, and are enlivened with birds in every position, some of them being, in proportion to other figures, certainly *larger* than life, and "twice as natural."

TAPISSERIES DE LA CHAISE DIEU.—"L'Abbaye de la Chaise Dieu fut fondée en 1046 par Robert qu'Alexandre 2<sup>e</sup> canonisa plus tard en 1070; et dont l'origine se rattachait à la famille des comtes de Poitou.

"Robert fut destinée de bonne heure aux fonctions



du sacerdoce." He went on pilgrimage to the tombs of some of the Apostles, and it was on his return thence that he was first struck with the idea of founding a cœnobitical establishment.

" Reuni à un soldat nommé Etienne, à un solitaire nommé Delmas, et à un chanoine nommé Arbert, il se retira dans la solitude, et s'emparant du désert au profit de la religion, il planta la croix du Sauveur dans les lieux jusque-là convertis de forêts et de bruyères incultes, et rassembla quelques disciples pour vivre auprès de lui sous la règle qu'un ange lui avait, disait il, apportée du ciel.

" Bientôt la réputation des cénobites s'étendit; Robert fut reconnu comme leur chef. De toutes parts on accourut les visiter. Des donations leur furent faites, et sur les ruines d'une ancienne église une nouvelle basilique s'éleva.

" Telle est à peu près l'histoire primitive de l'abbaye de la Chaise-Dieu."

The Chaise-Dieu tapestries are fourteen in number, three of them are ten feet square, and the others are six feet high by eighteen long, excepting one which measures nearly twenty-six feet. Twelve are hung on the carved wood-work of the choir of the great church, and thus cover an immense space. Further off is the ancient choir of the monks, of which the wood-work of sculptured oak is surprisingly rich. Not even the cathedral of Rheims, of which the wood-work has long been regarded as the most beautiful in the kingdom, contains so great a number. Unhappily in times of intestine commotion this chef d'œuvre has been horribly mutilated by the axes of modern iconoclasts, more ferocious

than the barbarians of old. The two other tapestries are placed in the Church of the Penitents, an ancient refectory of the monks which now forms a dependent chapel to the great temple.

These magnificent hangings are woven of wool and silk, and one yet perceives almost throughout, golden and silver threads which time has spared. When the artist prepared to copy them for the work we are quoting, no one dreamt of the richness buried beneath the accumulated dust and dirt of centuries. They were carefully cleaned, and then, says the artist, “Je suis ébloui de cette magnificence que nous ne soupçonnions plus. C’est admirable. Les Gobelins ne produisent pas aujourd’hui de tissus plus riches et plus éclatans. Imaginez vous que les robes des femmes, les ornemens, les colonnettes sont émaillées, ruisselantes de milliers de pierres fines et de perles,” &c.

It would be tedious to attempt to describe individually the subjects of these tapestries. They interweave the histories of the Old and New Testaments; the centre of the work generally representing some passage in the life of our Saviour, whilst on each side is some correspondent typical incident from the Old Testament. Above are rhymed quatrains, either legendary or scriptural; and below and around are sentences drawn from the prophets or the psalms.

These tapestries appear to have been the production of the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, denoting in the architecture and costumes *more* the reigns of Charles VIII. and Louis XI., than of Louis XII. and Francis I

Such pieces were probably long in the loom, since the tapestry of Dijon, composed of a single *lai* of twenty-one feet, required not less, according to a competent judge, than ten years' labour.

There are some most beautiful, even amongst these all-beautiful engravings, which we much regret to see there—engravings of the tapestry in the cathedral of Aix, which tapestry ought still to enrich our own country. Shame on those under whose barbarous rule these, amongst other valuable and cherished monuments, were, as relics of papistry, bartered for foreign gold. “*L’histoire manuscrite de la ville d’Aix dit que cette tapisserie avait servi à l’église de St. Paul de Londres ou à toute autre église cathédrale d’Angleterre; qu’à l’époque de la Réformation, les tableaux et les tapisseries ayant été exclus des temples, les Anglais chercherent à vendre dans les pays étrangers quelques unes des tapisseries qui ornaient leurs cathédrales, et qu’ils en brûlèrent un plus grand nombre !*”

This tapestry represents the history of our Saviour, in twenty seven compartments, being in the whole about 187 feet long. It is supposed to have been woven about 1511, when William Warham was Archbishop of Canterbury, and Chancellor. Warham had been previously Bishop of London; and as his arms are on this tapestry, and also the arms of two prior bishops of London who are supposed to have left legacies to ornament the church which were applied towards defraying the expenses of this manufacture, it seems quite probable that its destination was St. Paul's, and not any other cathedral church. The arms of the king are inwrought in two

places ; for Henry contributed to the embellishment of this church. He loved the arts ; he decorated churches ; and though he seceded from the Roman communion, he maintained throughout his life magnificent decorations in his favourite churches as well as the worship of the ancient Catholic Church. It was first under Edward, and more decidedly under Elizabeth, that the ceremonies of the church were completely changed, and that those which had been considered only decent and becoming were stigmatised as popish. Nor did this fantasy reach its height until the time of Cromwell.

Lord Douglas, Earl of Buchan, who founded the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh, endeavoured during the interval of the Peace of Amiens, to treat with the Archbishop of Aix for the re-purchase of this tapestry. He would have placed it in a Gothic church belonging to an ancient Scotch Abbey on his domains. He had already ornamented this church with several beautiful monuments of antiquity, and he wished to place this tapestry there as a national monument, but the treaty was broken off.

The TAPESTRIES OF AULHAC, representing the siege of Troy, and those of BEAUVAIS, embracing a variety of subjects from history both sacred and profane ; of the LOUVRE, representing the Miracle of St. Quentin, tapestry representing ALEXANDER, King of Scotland ; and those of St. REMI, at Rheims, are all engraven and described.

Those of the magnificent cathedral church at Rheims, consisting of forty tapestries, forming different collections, but all on religious subjects, will probably form the material for future numbers.

THAT there are ancient tapestries existing in England fully equal to those in France is, we think, almost certain; but of course they are not to be summoned from the "vasty deep" of neglect and oblivion by the powerless voice of an obscure individual. Gladly would we, had it been in our power, have enriched our sketch by references to some of them.

The following notice of a tapestry at Coventry is drawn from "Smith's Selections of the ancient Costume of Britain;" and the names of the tapestries at Hampton Court Palace from "Pyne's Royal Residences." We have recently visited Hampton Court for the express purpose of viewing the tapestries. There, we believe, they were, entirely (with the exception of a stray inch or two here and there) hung over with paintings.

The splendid though neglected tapestry of St. Mary's Hall at Coventry offers a variety of materials no less interesting on account of the sanctity and misfortunes of the prince (Henry VI.) who is there represented, than curious as specimens of the arts of drawing, dyeing, and embroidery of the time in which it was executed.

It is thirty feet in length and ten in height; and is divided into six compartments, three in the upper tier and three in the lower, containing in all upwards of eighty figures or heads. The centre compartment of the upper row, in its perfect and original state, represented the usual personification of the Trinity—the Trinity Guild held its meetings in the hall of St. Mary) surrounded by angels bearing the various instruments of the Passion. But the



zeal of our early reformers sacrificed this part of the work, and substituted in its stead a tasteless figure of Justice, which now holds the scales amidst the original group of surrounding angels.

The right hand division of this tier is occupied with sundry figures of saints and martyrs, and the opposite side is filled with a group of female saints.

In the centre compartment below is represented the Virgin Mary in the clouds, standing on the crescent, surrounded by the twelve Apostles and many cherubs. But the two remaining portions of this fine tapestry constitute its chief value and importance to the city of Coventry, as they represent the figures of Henry VI., his Queen, the ambitious, and crafty, and cruel, yet beautiful and eloquent and injured Margaret of Anjou, and many of their attendants. During all the misfortunes of Henry, the citizens of Coventry zealously supported him; and their city is styled by historians "Queen Margaret's secret bower." As the tapestry was purposely made for the hall, and probably placed there during the lives of the sovereigns, the figures may be considered as authentic portraits.

The first Presence Chamber in Hampton Court is (or was) hung with rich ancient tapestry, representing a landscape, with the figures of Nymphs, Fawns, Satyrs, Nereides, &c.

There is some fine ancient tapestry in the King's Audience Chamber, the subjects being, on one side, Abraham and Lot dividing their lands; and on the other, God appearing to Abraham purchasing ground for a burying-place.

The tapestry on the walls of the King's Drawing-Room represents Abraham entertaining the three Angels ; also Abraham, Isaac, and Rebecca.

The tapestry which covers three sides of the King's State Bedchamber represents the history of Joshua.

The walls of the Queen's Audience Chamber are covered with tapestry hangings, which represent the story of Abraham and Melchisedec, and Abraham and Rebecca.

The Ball Room is called also the Tapestry Gallery, from the superb suite of hangings that ornament its walls, which was brought from Flanders by General Cadogan, and set up by order of George I. The series of seven compartments describes the history of Alexander the Great, from the paintings of the celebrated Charles le Brun. The first represents the story of Alexander and his horse Bucephalus ; the second, the visit of Alexander to Diogenes ; the third, the passage of Alexander over the Granicus ; the fourth, Alexander's visit to the mother and wife of Darius, in their tent, after the battle of Arbela ; the fifth, Alexander's triumphal entrance into Babylon ; the sixth, Alexander's battle with Porus ; the seventh, his second entrance into Babylon.—These magnificent hangings were wrought at the Gobelins.

The tapestry hangings in the king's private bedchamber describe the naval battle of Solebay between the combined fleets of England and France and the Dutch fleet, in 1672.

Of all the tapestries here recorded, the last only, representing the Battle of Solebay, are now visible.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## EMBROIDERY.

“ Flowers, Plants and Fishes, Beasts, Birds, Flyes, and Bees,  
 Hills, Dales, Plaines, Pastures, Skies, Seas, Rivers, Trees,  
 There's nothing neere at hand, or farthest sought,  
 But with the Needle may be shap'd and wrought.”

JOHN TAYLOR.

PERHAPS of all nations in very ancient times the Medes and Babylonians were most celebrated for the draperies of the apartments, about which they were even more anxious than about their attire. All their noted hangings with which their palaces were so gorgeously celebrated were wrought by the needle. And though now everywhere the loom is in request, still these and other eastern nations maintain great practice and unrivalled skill in needle embroidery. Sir John Chardin says of the Persians, “ Their tailors certainly excel ours in their sewing. They make carpets, cushions, veils for doors, and other pieces of furniture of felt, in Mosaic work, which represents just what they please. This is done so neatly, that a man might suppose the figures were painted instead of being a kind of inlaid work. Look as close as you will, the joining

cannot be seen ;” and the Hall of Audience at Jeddo, we are told, is a sumptuous edifice ; the roof covered with gold and silver of exquisite workmanship, the throne of massy gold enriched with pearls, diamonds, and other precious stones. The tapestry is of the finest silk, wrought by the *most curious hands*, and adorned with pearls, gold, and silver, and other costly embellishments.

About the close of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century, the Caliph Moctadi’s whole army, both horse and foot, (says Abulfeda) were under arms, which together made a body of 160,000 men. His state officers stood near him in the most splendid apparel, their belts shining with gold and gems. Near them were 7000 black and white eunuchs. The porters or door-keepers were in number 700. Barges and boats, with the most superb decorations, were swimming on the Tigris. Nor was the palace itself less splendid, in which were hung 38,000 *pieces of tapestry*, 12,500 of which were of silk embroidered with gold. The carpets on the floor were 22,000. A hundred lions were brought out with a keeper to each lion. Among the other spectacles of rare and stupendous luxury, was a tree of gold and silver, which opened itself into eighteen larger branches, upon which, and the other less branches sate birds of every sort, made also of gold and silver. The tree glittered with leaves of the same metals, and while its branches, through machinery, appeared to move of themselves, the several birds upon them warbled their natural notes.

The skill of the eastern embroiderer has always had a wide field for display in the decoration of the

*tents*, which were in such request in hot countries, among Nomadic tribes, or on military excursions.

The covering of tents among the Arabs is usually black goats' hair, so compactly woven as to be impervious to rain. But there is, besides this, always an inner one, on which the skill and industry of the fair artisan—for both outer and inner are woven and wrought by women—is displayed. This is often white woollen stuff, on which flowers are usually embroidered. Curious hangings too are frequently hung over the entrances, when the means of the possessors do not admit of more general decoration. Magnificent *perdahs*, or hangings of needlework, are always suspended in the tents of persons of rank and fashion, who assume a more ambitious decoration; and there are accounts in various travellers of tents which must have been gorgeous in the extreme.

Nadir Shah, out of the abundance of his spoils, caused a tent or tabernacle to be made of such beauty and magnificence as were almost beyond description. The outside was covered with fine scarlet broad cloth, the lining was of violet coloured satin, on which were representations of all the birds and beasts in the creation, with trees and flowers; the whole made of pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, amethysts, and other precious stones; and the tent-poles were decorated in like manner. On both sides of the peacock throne was a screen, on which were the figures of two angels in precious stones. The roof of the tent consisted of seven pieces; and when it was transported to any place, two of these pieces packed in cotton were put into a wooden chest, two



of which chests were a sufficient load for an elephant: the screen filled another chest. The walls of the tent—tent-poles and tent-pins, which were of massy gold, loaded five more elephants; so that for the carriage of the whole were required seven elephants. This magnificent tent was displayed on all festivals in the public hall at Herat, during the remainder of Nadir Shah's reign.

Sir J. Chardin tells us that the late King of Persia caused a tent to be made which cost 2,000,000*l*. They called it the House of Gold, because gold glittered everywhere about it. He adds, that there was an inscription wrought upon the cornice of the antechamber, which gave it the appellation of the Throne of the second Solomon, and at the same time marked out the year of its construction. The following description of Antar's tent from the Bedouin romance of that name has been often quoted:—

“When spread out it occupied half the land of Shurebah, for it was the load of forty camels; and there was an awning at the door of the pavilion under which 4000 of the Absian horse could skirmish. It was embroidered with burnished gold, studded with precious stones and diamonds, interspersed with rubies and emeralds, set with rows of pearls; and there was painted thereon a specimen of every created thing, birds and trees, and towns, and cities, and seas, and continents, and beasts, and reptiles; and whoever looked at it was confounded by the variety of the representations, and by the brilliancy of the silver and gold: and so magnificent was the whole, that when the pavilion was pitched,

the land of Shurebah and Mount Saadi were illuminated by its splendour."

Extravagant as seems this description, we are told that it is not so much exaggerated as we might imagine. "Poetical license" has indeed been indulged in to the fullest extent, especially as to the size of the pavilion; yet Marco Polo in sober earnest describes one under which 10,000 soldiers might be drawn up *without incommoding the nobles at the audience*.

It is well known that Mohammed forbade his followers to imitate any animal or insect in their embroideries or ornamental work of any sort. Hence the origin of the term *arabesque*, which we now use to express all odd combinations of patterns from which human and animal forms are excluded. That portion of the race which merged in the Moors of Spain were especially remarked for their magnificent and beautiful decorative work; and from them did we borrow, as before alluded to, the custom of using tapestry for curtains.

At the present day none are perhaps more patient and laborious embroiderers than the Chinese; their regularity and neatness are supposed to be unequalled, and the extreme care with which they work preserves their shades bright and shining.

The Indians excel in variety of embroidery. They embroider with cotton on muslin, but they employ on gauze, rushes, skins of insects, nails and claws of animals, of walnuts, and dry fruits, and above all, the feathers of birds. They mingle their colours without harmony as without taste; it is only a species of wild mosaic, which announces no plan,

and represents no object. The women of the wandering tribes of Persia weave those rich carpets which are called Turkey carpets, from the place of their immediate importation. But this country was formerly celebrated for magnificent embroideries, and also for tapestries composed of silk and wool embellished with gold. This latter beautiful art, though not entirely lost, is nearly so for want of encouragement. But of all eastern nations the Moguls were the most celebrated for their splendid embroideries; walls, couches, and even floors were covered with silk or cotton fabrics richly worked with gold, and often, as in ancient times, with gems inwrought. But this empire has ever been proverbial for its splendour; at one time the throne of the Mogul was estimated at 4,000,000*l.* sterling, made up by diamonds and other jewels, received in gifts during a long succession of ages.

We have, in a former chapter, alluded to the custom of embroidery in imitation of feathers, and also for using real feathers for ornamental work. This is much the custom in many countries. Some of the inhabitants of New Holland make artificial flowers with feathers, with consummate skill; and they are not uncommon, though vastly inferior, here. Various articles of dress are frequently seen made of them, as feather muffs, feather tippetts, &c.; and we have seen within the last few months a bonnet covered with *peacock's* feathers. This, however, is certainly the *extreme* of fancy. The celebrated Mrs. Montague had hangings ornamented with feathers: the hangings doubtless are gone: the name of the accomplished lady who displayed them in her

fashionable halls is sinking into oblivion, but the poet, who perchance merely glanced at them, lives for ever.

#### ON MRS. MONTAGUE'S FEATHER HANGINGS.

“ The birds put off their ev'ry hue,  
 To dress a room for Montague.  
 The peacock sends his heavenly dyes,  
 His *rainbows* and his *starry eyes* ;  
 The pheasant plumes, which round infold  
 His mantling neck with downy gold ;  
 The cock his arch'd tail's azure shew ;  
 And, river blanch'd, the swan his snow.  
 All tribes beside of Indian name,  
 That glossy shine, or vivid flame,  
 Where rises, and where sets the day,  
 Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,  
 Contribute to the gorgeous plan,  
 Proud to advance it all they can.  
 This plumage, neither dashing shower,  
 Nor blasts that shape the dripping bow'r,  
 Shall drench again or discompose—  
 But screen'd from ev'ry storm that blows  
 It boasts a splendour ever new,  
 Safe with protecting Montague.”

Some Canadian women embroider with their own hair and that of animals; they copy beautifully the ramifications of moss-agates, and of several plants. They insinuate in their works skins of serpents and morsels of fur patiently smoothed. If their embroidery is not so brilliant as that of the Chinese, it is not less industrious.

The negresses of Senegal embroider the skin of different animals of flowers and figures of all colours.

The Turks and Georgians embroider marvelously the lightest gauze or most delicate crape.

They use gold thread with inconceivable delicacy ; they represent the most minute objects on morocco without varying the form, or fraying the finest gold, by a proceeding quite unknown to us. They frequently ornament their embroidery with pieces of money of different nations, and travellers who are aware of this circumstance often find in their old garments valuable and interesting coins.

The Saxons imitate the designs of the most accomplished work-people ; their embroidery with untwisted thread on muslin is the most delicate and correct we are acquainted with of that kind.

The embroidery of Venice and Milan has long been celebrated, but its excessive dearness prevents the use of it. There is also much beautiful embroidery in France, but the palm for precedence is ably disputed by the Germans, especially those of Vienna.

This progress and variations of this luxury amongst various nations would be a subject of curious research, but too intricate and lengthened for our pages. We have intimations of it at the earliest period, and there is no age in which it appears to have been totally laid aside, no nation in which it was in utter disrepute. Some of its most beautiful patterns have been, as in architecture, the adaptation of the moment from natural objects, for one of the first ornaments in Roman embroidery, when they departed from their primitive simplicity in dress, was the imitation of the leaf of the acanthus—the same leaf which imparted grace and ornament to the Corinthian capital.

But it would be endless to enter into the subject



of patterns, which doubtless were everywhere originally simple enough, with

“ here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,  
Or scarlet crewel.”

And patient minds must often have planned, and assiduous fingers must long have wrought, ere such an achievement was perfected, as even the covering of the joint stool described by Cowper:—

“ At length a generation more refin'd  
Improved the simple plan; made three legs four,  
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,  
And o'er the seat with plenteous wadding stuff'd,  
Induc'd a splendid cover, green and blue,  
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought  
And woven close, or needlework sublime.  
There might ye see the piony spread wide,  
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,  
Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes,  
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.”

But from the days of Elizabeth the practice of ornamental needlework, of embroidery, had gradually declined in England: the literary and scholastic pursuits which in her day had superseded the use of the needle, did not indeed continue the fashion of later times; still the needle was not resumed, nor perhaps has embroidery and tapestry ever from the days of Elizabeth been so much practised as it is now. Many *individuals* have indeed been celebrated, as one thus:—

“ She wrought all needleworks that women exercise,  
With pen, frame, or stoole; all pictures artificial,  
Curious knots or trailes, what fancy could devise;  
Beasts, birds, or flowers, even as things natural.”

But still embroidery had ceased to be looked upon as a necessary accomplishment, or taught as an important part of education. In the early part of the last century women had become so mischievous from the lack of this employment, that the "Spectator" seriously recommends it to the attention of the community at large.

"MR. SPECTATOR,

"I have a couple of nieces under my direction who so often run gadding abroad, that I do not know where to have them. Their dress, their tea, and their visits, take up all their time, and they go to bed as tired doing nothing, as I am often after quilting a whole under-petticoat. The only time they are not idle is while they read your Spectator, which being dedicated to the interests of virtue, I desire you to recommend the long-neglected art of needlework. Those hours which in this age are thrown away in dress, play, visits, and the like, were employed in my time in writing out receipts, or working beds, chairs, and hangings for the family. For my part I have plied my needle these fifty years, and by my good will would never have it out of my hand. It grieves my heart to see a couple of idle flirts sipping their tea, for a whole afternoon, in a room hung round with the industry of their great-grandmother. Pray, Sir, take the laudable mystery of embroidery into your serious consideration; and as you have a great deal of the virtue of the last age in you, continue your endeavours to reform the present.

"I am, &c., ———"

“ In obedience to the commands of my venerable correspondent, I have duly weighed this important subject, and promise myself from the arguments here laid down, that all the fine ladies of England will be ready, as soon as the mourning is over (for Queen Anne) to appear covered with the work of their own hands.

“ What a delightful entertainment must it be to the fair sex whom their native modesty, and the tenderness of men towards them exempt from public business, to pass their hours in imitating fruits and flowers, and transplanting all the beauties of nature into their own dress, or raising a new creation in their closets and apartments ! How pleasing is the amusement of walking among the shades and groves planted by themselves, in surveying heroes slain by the needle, or little Cupids which they have brought into the world without pain !

“ This is, methinks, the most proper way wherein a lady can show a fine genius ; and I cannot forbear wishing that several writers of that sex had chosen to apply themselves rather to tapestry than rhyme. Your pastoral poetesses may vent their fancy in great landscapes, and place despairing shepherds under silken willows, or drown them in a stream of mohair. The heroic writers may work of battles as successfully, and inflame them with gold, or stain them with crimson. Even those who have only a turn to a song or an epigram, may put many valuable stitches into a purse, and crowd a thousand graces into a pair of garters.

“ If I may, without breach of good manners, imagine that any pretty creature is void of genius, and

would perform her part herein but very awkwardly, I must nevertheless insist upon her working, if it be only to keep her out of harm's way.

“ Another argument for busying good women in works of fancy is, because it takes them off from scandal, the usual attendant of tea-tables and all other inactive scenes of life. While they are forming their birds and beasts, their neighbours will be allowed to be the fathers of their own children, and Whig and Tory will be but seldom mentioned where the great dispute is, whether blue or red is now the proper colour. How much greater glory would Sophronia do the general if she would choose rather to work the battle of Blenheim in tapestry than signalise herself with so much vehemence against those who are Frenchmen in their hearts !

“ A third reason I shall mention is, the profit that is brought to the family when these pretty arts are encouraged. It is manifest that this way of life not only keeps fair ladies from running out into expenses, but is at the same time an actual improvement.

“ How memorable would that matron be, who shall have it subscribed upon her monument, ‘ She that wrought out the whole Bible in tapestry, and died in a good old age, after having covered 300 yards of wall in the Mansion House !’

“ The premises being considered, I humbly submit the following proposals to all mothers in Great Britain :—

“ 1. That no young virgin whatsoever be allowed to receive the addresses of her first lover, but in a suit of her own embroidering.

“ 2. That before every fresh humble servant she

shall be obliged to appear with a new stomacher at the least.

“ 3. That no one be actually married until she hath the child-bed pillows, &c., ready stitched, as likewise the mantle for the boy quite finished.

“ These laws, if I mistake not, would effectually restore the decayed art of needlework, and make the virgins of Great Britain exceedingly nimble-fingered in their business.”

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

## NEEDLEWORK ON BOOKS.

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“ And often did she look  
On that which in her hand she bore,  
In velvet bound and broider’d o’er—  
Her breviary book.”—MARMION.

“ Books are ours,  
Within whose silent chambers treasure lies  
Preserved from age to age—  
These hoards of truth we can unlock at will.”—WORDSWORTH.

DEEP indeed are our obligations for those treasures which “we can unlock at will :” treasures of far more value than gold or gems, for they oftentimes bestow that which gold cannot purchase—even forgetfulness of sorrow and pain. Happy are those who have a taste for reading and leisure to indulge it. It is the most beguiling solace of life : it is its most ennobling pursuit. It is a magnificent thing to converse with the master spirits of past ages, to behold them as they were ; to mingle thought with thought and mind with mind ; to let the imagination rove—based however on the authentic record of the past—through dim and distant ages ; to behold the fathers and prophets of the ancient earth ; to hold communion

with martyrs and prophets, and kings; to kneel at the feet of the mighty lawgiver; to bend at the shrine of the eternal poet; to imbibe inspiration from the eloquent, to gather instruction from the wise, and pleasure from the gifted; to behold, as in a glass, all the majesty and all the beauty of the mighty PAST, to revel in all the accumulated treasures of Time—and this, all this, we have by reading the privilege to do. Imagination indeed, the gift of heaven, may soar elate, unchecked, though untutored through time and space, through Time to Eternity, and may people worlds at will; but that truthful basis which can alone give permanence to her visions, that knowledge which ennobles and purifies and elevates them is acquired from books, whether

Song of the Muses, says historic tale,  
Science severe, or word of Holy Writ,  
Announcing immortality and joy."

The "word of Holy Writ," the BIBLE—we pass over its hopes, its promises, its consolations—these themes are too sacred even for reference on our light page—but here, we may remark, we see the world in its freshness, its prime, its glory. We converse truly with godlike men and angelic women. We see the mighty and majestic fathers of the human race ere sin had corrupted all their godlike seeming; ere sorrow—the bequeathed and inherited sorrows of ages—had quite seared the "human face divine;" ere sloth, and luxury, and corruption, and decay, had altered features formed in the similitude of heaven to the gross semblance of earth; and we walk step by step over the new fresh earth as yet

untrodden by foot of man, and behold the ancient solitudes gradually invaded by his advancing steps.

Most gentle, most soothing, most faithful companions are books. They afford amusement for the lonely hour; solace perchance for the sorrowful one: they offer recreation to the light-hearted; instruction to the inquiring; inspiration to the aspiring mind; food for the thirsty one. They are inexhaustible in extent as in variety: and oh! in the silent vigil by the suffering couch, or during the languor of indisposition, who can too highly praise those silent friends—silent indeed to the ear, but speaking eloquently to the heart—which beguile, even transiently, the mind from present depressing care, strengthen and elevate it by communion with the past, or solace it by hopes of the future!

Listen how sweetly one of the first of modern men apostrophises his books:—

“ My days among the dead are past ;  
    Around me I behold,  
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,  
    The mighty minds of old ;  
My never-failing friends are they,  
With whom I converse day by day.

“ With them I take delight in weal,  
    And seek relief in woe ;  
And while I understand and feel  
    How much to them I owe,  
My cheeks have often been bedew'd,  
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

“ My thoughts are with the dead ; with them  
    I live in long past years ;  
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,  
    Partake their hopes and fears,  
And from their lessons seek and find  
Instruction with a humble mind.

“ My hopes are with the dead ; anon  
My place with them will be,  
And I with them shall travel on  
Through all futurity ;  
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,  
That will not perish in the dust.” \*

Yet how little are we of the present day, who have books poured into our laps, able to estimate their real value ! Nor is it possible that they can ever again be estimated as they once were. The universal diffusion of them, the incalculable multiplication of them, seems to render it impossible that the world can ever be deprived of them. No. We must call up some of the spirits of the “ pious and painful ” amanuenses of those days when the fourth estate of the realm, the public press—WAS NOT—to tell us the real value of the literary treasures we now esteem so lightly. He will tell us that in his day the donation of a single book to a religious house was thought to give the donor a claim to eternal salvation ; and that an offering so valued, so cherished, would be laid on the high altar amid pomp and pageantry. He might perhaps personally remember the prior and convent of Rochester pronouncing an irrevocable sentence of damnation on him who should purloin or conceal their treasured Latin translation of Aristotle’s physics. He would tell us that the holiest and wisest of men would forego ease and luxury and spend laborious years in transcribing books for the good of others ; he will tell us that amongst many others, Osmond, Bishop of Salisbury, did this, and

\* Southey.

perchance he will name that Guido de Jars, in his fortieth year, began to copy the Bible on vellum, with rich and elegant decorations, and that the suns of half a century had risen and set, ere, with unintermitting labour and unwearied zeal, he finished it in his ninetieth. He will also tell us, that when a book was to be sold, it was customary to assemble all persons of consequence and character in the neighbourhood, and to make a formal record that they were present on this occasion. Thus, amongst the royal MSS. is a book thus described :—

“ This book of the Sentences belongs to Master Robert, archdeacon of Lincoln, which he bought of Geoffrey the chaplain, brother of Henry vicar of Northelkingston, in the presence of Master Robert de Lee, Master John of Lirling, Richard of Luda, clerk, Richard the Almoner, the said Henry the vicar and his clerk, and others: and the said archdeacon gave the said book to God and saint Oswald, and to Peter abbot of Barton, and the convent of Barden.”

These are a few, a very few of such instances as a spirit of the fourteenth century might allude to—to testify the value of books. Indeed, even so late as the reign of Henry the VI., when the invention of paper greatly facilitated the multiplication of MSS. the impediments to study, from the scarcity of books, must have been very great, for in the statutes of St. Mary's College, Oxford, is this order—“ Let no scholar occupy a book in the library above one hour, or two hours at the most; lest others shall be hindered from the use of the same.”

The scarcity of parchment seems indeed at times to have been a greater hindrance to the promulga-



tion of literature than even the laborious and tedious transcription of the books. About 1120, one Master Hugh, being appointed by the convent of St. Edmondsbury to write a copy of the Bible, for their library, could procure no parchment in England. The following particulars of the scarcity of books before the era of printing, gathered chiefly by Warton, are interesting.

In 855, Lupus, abbot of Ferrieres in France, sent two of his monks to Pope Benedict the third, to beg a copy of Cicero de Oratore, and Quintilian's Institutes, and some other books: for, says the abbot, although we have part of these books, yet there is no whole or complete copy of them in all France.

Albert, abbot of Gemblours, who with incredible labour and immense expense had collected a hundred volumes on theological, and fifty on general subjects, imagined he had formed a splendid library.

About 790, Charlemagne granted an unlimited right to hunting to the abbot and monks of Sithin, for making their gloves and girdles of the skins of the deer they killed, and covers for their books.

At the beginning of the tenth century, books were so scarce in Spain, that one and the same copy of the Bible, St. Jerome's Epistles, and some volumes of ecclesiastical offices and martyrologies, often served several different monasteries.

Amongst the constitutions given to the monks of England by Archbishop Lanfranc, in 1072, the following injunction occurs: At the beginning of Lent, the librarian is ordered to deliver a book to each of the religious; a whole year was allowed for the perusal of this book! and at the returning Lent, those

monks who had neglected to read the books they had respectively received, are commanded to prostrate themselves before the abbot to supplicate his indulgence. This regulation was partly occasioned by the low state of literature in which Lanfranc found the English monasteries to be; but at the same time it was a matter of necessity, and partly to be referred to the scarcity of copies of useful and suitable authors.

John de Pontissara, Bishop of Winchester, borrowed of his cathedral convent of St. Swithin at Winchester, in 1299, BIBLIAM BENE GLOSSATAM, or the Bible, with marginal annotations, in two large folio volumes; but he gives a bond for due return of the loan, drawn up with great solemnity. This Bible had been bequeathed to the Convent the same year by his predecessor, Bishop Nicholas de Ely: and in consideration of so important a bequest, and 100 marks in money, the monks founded a daily mass for the soul of the donor.

About 1225 Roger de Tusula, dean of York, gave several Latin Bibles to the University of Oxford, with a condition that the students who perused them should deposit a cautionary pledge.

The Library of that University, before the year 1300, consisted only of a few tracts, chained or kept in chests in the choir of St. Mary's Church.

Books often brought excessive prices in the middle ages. In 1174, Walter, Prior of St. Swithin's at Winchester, and afterwards abbot of Westminster, purchased of the monks of Dorchester in Oxfordshire Bede's Homilies and St. Austin's Psalter, for twelve measures of barley, and a pall on which was

embroidered in silver the history of Birinus converting a Saxon king.

About 1400, a copy of John de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* was sold before the palace-gate at Paris for forty crowns, or 33*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.*

In Edward the Third's reign, one hundred marks (equal to 1000*l.*) were paid to Isabella de Lancaster, a nun of Ambresbury, for a book of romance, purchased from her for the king's use.

Warton mentions a book of the Gospels, in the Cotton Library, as a fine specimen of Saxon calligraphy and decorations. It is written by Eadfrid, Bishop of Durham, in the most exquisite manner. Ethelwold his successor did the illuminations, the capital letters, the picture of the cross, and the Evangelists, with infinite labour and elegance; and Bilfred, the anchorite, covered the book, thus written and adorned, with silver plates and precious stones. It was finished about 720.

The encouragement given in the English monasteries for transcribing books was very considerable. In every great abbey there was an apartment called "The Scriptorium;" where many writers were constantly busied in transcribing not only the Service Books for the choir, but books for the Library. The Scriptorium of St Alban's Abbey was built by Abbot Paulin, a Norman, who ordered many volumes to be written there, about 1080. Archbishop Lanfranc furnished the copies. Estates were often granted for the support of the Scriptorium. That at St. Edmundsbury was endowed with two mills. The tithes of a rectory were appropriated to the Cathedral convent of St. Swithin, at Win-

chester, *ad libros transcribendos*, in the year 1171.

Nigel in the year 1160 gave the monks of Ely two churches, *ad libros faciendos*.

When the library at Croyland Abbey was burnt in 1091, seven hundred volumes were consumed, which must have been thus laboriously produced.

Fifty-eight volumes were transcribed at Glastonbury during the government of one Abbot, about the year 1300. And in the library of this monastery, the richest in England, there were upwards of four hundred volumes in the year 1248.

But whilst there is sufficient cause to admire the penmen of former days, in the mere transcription of books, shall we not marvel at the beauty with which they were invested ; the rich and brilliant illuminations, the finely tinted paintings, the magnificent and laborious ornament with which not merely every page, but in many manuscripts almost every line was decorated ! They, such as have been preserved, form a valuable proportion of the riches of the principal European libraries : of the Vatican of Rome ; the Imperial at Vienna ; St. Mark's at Venice ; the Escorial in Spain ; and the principal public libraries in England.

The art of thus illuminating MSS., now entirely lost, had attained the highest degree of perfection, and is, indeed, of ancient origin. In the remotest times the common colours of black and white have been varied by luxury and taste. Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus mention purple and yellow skins, on which MSS. were written in gold and silver ; and amongst the eastern nations rolls of this kind (that is

gold and silver on purple), exquisitely executed, are found in abundance, but of a later date. Still they appear to have been familiar with the practice at a much more remote period; and it is probable that the Greeks acquired this art from Egypt or India. From the Greeks it would naturally pass to the Latins, who appear to have been acquainted with it early in the second century. The earliest specimen of purple or rose-coloured vellum is recorded in the life of the Emperor Maximinus the younger, to whom, in the commencement of the third century, his mother made a present of the poems of Homer, written on purple vellum in gold letters. Such productions were, however, at this time very rare. The celebrated Codex Argenteus of Ulphilas, written in silver and gold letters on a purple ground, about 360, is probably the most ancient existing specimen of this magnificent mode of calligraphy. In the fourth century it had become more common: many ecclesiastical writers allude to it, and St. Jerome especially does so; and the following spirited dialogue has reference to his somewhat condemnatory allusions.

“Purple vellum Greek MSS.” says Breiting, “if I remember rightly, are scarcer than white crows!”

BELINDA. “Pray tell us ‘all about them,’ as the children say.”

PHILEMON. “Well, then, at your next court visit, let your gown rival the emblazoned aspect of these old purple vellums, and let stars of silver, thickly “powdered” thereupon, emulate, if they dare, the silver capital Greek letters upon the purple membranaceous fragments which have survived the desolations of time! You see, I do not speak *coldly* upon this picturesque subject!”



ALIMANSA. "Nor do I feel precisely as if I were in the *frigid* zone! But proceed and expatiate."

PHILEMON. "The field for expatiating is unluckily very limited. The fact of the more ancient MSS. before noticed, the *Pentateuch* at *Vienna*, the fragment of the Gospels in the British Museum, with a Psalter or two in a few libraries abroad, are all the MSS. which just now occur to me as being distinguished by a *purple tint*, for I apprehend little more than a *tint* remains. Whether the white or the purple vellum be the more ancient, I cannot take upon me to determine; but it is right you should be informed that St. Jerom denounces as *coxcombs*, all those who, in his own time, were so violently attached to your favourite purple colour."

LISARDO. "I have a great respect for the literary attainments of St. Jerom; and although in the absence of the old Italic version of the Greek Bible, I am willing to subscribe to the excellence of his own, or what is now called the *Vulgate*, yet in matters of taste, connected with the harmony of colour, you must excuse me if I choose to enter my protest against that venerable father's decision."

PHILEMON. "You appear to mistake the matter St. Jerom imagined that this appetite for purple MSS. was rather artificial and voluptuous; requiring regulation and correction—and that, in the end, men would prefer the former colour to the intrinsic worth of their vellum treasures."

We must not omit the note appended to this colloquy.

“ The general idea seems to be that PURPLE VELLUM MSS. were intended only for “ choice blades,” let us rather say, tasteful bibliomaniacs—in book collecting. St. Jerom, as Philemon above observes, is very biting in his sarcasm upon these “ purple leaves covered with letters of gold and silver.”—“ For myself and my friends (adds that father), let us have lower priced books, and distinguished not so much for beauty as for accuracy.”

“ Mabillon remarks that these purple treasures were for the ‘princes’ and ‘noblemen’ of the times.

“ And we learn from the twelfth volume of the Specilegium of Theonas, that it is rather somewhat unseemly ‘to write upon purple vellum in letters of gold and silver, unless at the particular desire of a prince.’ ”

“ The *subject* also of MSS. frequently regulated the mode of executing it. Thus we learn from the 28th Epistle of Boniface (Bishop and Martyr) to the abbess Eadburga, that this latter is entreated ‘to write the Epistles of St. Peter, the master and Apostle of Boniface, in letters of gold, for the greater reverence to be paid towards the Sacred Scriptures, when the Abbess preaches before her carnally-minded auditors.’ ”

About the close of the seventh century the Archbishop of York procured for his church a copy of the Gospels thus adorned; and that this magnificent calligraphy was then new in England may be inferred from a remark made on it that “*inauditam ante seculis nostris quoddam miraculam.*”

This art, however, shortly after declined every-

where; and in England the art of writing in gold letters, even without the rich addition of the purple-tinted material, seems to have been but imperfectly understood. The only remarkable instance of it is said to be the charter of King Edgar, in the new Minster at Winchester, in 966. In the fourteenth century it seems to have been more customary than in those immediately preceding it.

But we have been beguiled too long from that which alone is connected with our subject, viz., the *binding* of books. Probably this was originally a plain and unadorned oaken cover; though as books were found only in monastic establishments, or in the mansions of the rich, even the cover soon became emblematic of its valuable contents.

The early ornaments of the back were chiefly of a religious character—a representation of the Virgin, of the infant Saviour, of the Crucifixion. Dibdin mentions a Latin Psalter of the ninth century in this primitive and substantial binding, and on the oaken board was riveted a large brass crucifix, originally, probably, washed with silver; and also a MS. of the Latin Gospels of the twelfth or thirteenth century, in oaken covers, inlaid with pieces of carved ivory, representing our Saviour with an angel above him, and the Virgin and Child.

The carved ivory may probably be a subsequent interpolation, but it does not the less exemplify the practice. But as the taste for luxury and ornament increased, and the bindings, even the clumsy wooden ones, became more gorgeously decorated—the most costly gems and precious stones being frequently inlaid with the golden ornaments—the shape and

form of them was altogether altered. With a view to the preservation and the safety of the riches lavished on them, the bindings were made double, each side being perhaps two inches thick; and on a spring being touched, or a secret lock opened, it divided, almost like the opening of a cupboard-door, and displayed the rich ornament and treasure within; whilst, when closed, the outside had only the appearance of a plain, somewhat clumsy binding.

At that time, too, books were ranged on shelves with the leaves in front; therefore great pains were taken, both in the decoration of the edges, and also in the rich and ornamental clasps and strings which united the wooden sides. These clasps were frequently of gold, inlaid with jewels.

The wooden sides were afterwards covered with leather, with vellum, with velvet,—though probably there is no specimen of velvet binding before the fourteenth century; and, indeed, as time advanced, there is scarcely any substance which was not applied to this purpose. Queen Elizabeth had a little volume of prayers bound in solid gold, which at prayer-time she suspended by a gold chain at her side; and we saw, a few years ago, a small devotional book which belonged to the Martyr-King, Charles, and which was given by him to the ancestress of the friend who showed it to us, beautifully bound in tortoise-shell and finely-carved silver.

But it was not to gold and precious stones alone that the bindings of former days were indebted for their beauty. The richest and rarest devices of the needlewoman were often wrought on the velvet, or

brocade, which became more exclusively the fashionable material for binding. This seems to have been a favourite occupation of the high-born dames about Elizabeth's day; and, indeed, if we remember the new-born passion for books, which was at its height about that time, we shall not wonder at their industry being displayed on the covers as well as the insides\*. But very probably this had been a favourite object for the needle long before this time, though unhappily the fragility of the work was equal to its beauty, and these needleworked covers have doubtless, in very many instances, been replaced by more substantial binding.

The earliest specimen of this description of binding remaining in the British Museum is "*Fichetus* (Guil.) *Rhetoricum*, Libri tres. (Impr. in Membranis) 4to. Paris ad Sorbonæ, 1471. It has an illuminated title-page, showing the author presenting, on his knees, his book to the Pope; and it is decorated throughout with illuminated letters and other ornaments; for long after the invention of printing, blank spaces were left, for the capitals and headings to be filled up by the pencil. Hence it is that we find some books quite incomplete; these spaces having been left, and not filled up.

When the art of illuminating still more failed, the red ink was used as a substitute, and everybody is acquainted with books of this style. The binding of Fitchet's '*Rhetoric*' is covered with crimson satin, on which is wrought with the needle a coat-of-arms:

\* We have seen cartouche-boxes embroidered precisely in the same style, and probably therefore of the same period as some of the embroidered books here referred to.



a lion rampant in gold thread, in a blue field, with a transverse badge in scarlet silk; the minor ornaments are all wrought in fine gold thread.

The next in date which I have seen there is a description of the Holy Land, in French, written in Henry VII.'s time, and illuminated. It is bound in rich maroon velvet, with the royal arms: the garter and motto embroidered in blue; the ground crimson; and the fleurs-de-lys, leopards, and letters of the motto in gold thread. A coronet, or crown, of gold thread, is inwrought with pearls; the roses at the corners are in red silk and gold; and there is a narrow border round the whole in burnished gold thread.

There is an edition of Petrarch's Sonnets, printed at Venice in 1544. It is in beautiful preservation. The back is of dark crimson velvet, and on each side is wrought a large royal coat-of-arms, in silk and gold, highly raised. The book belonged to Edward VI., but the arms are not his.

Queen Mary's Psalter, containing also the history of the Old Testament in a series of small paintings, and the work richly illuminated throughout, had once an exterior worthy of it. The crimson velvet, of which only small particles remain to attest its pristine richness, is literally thread-bare; and the highly-raised embroidery of a massy fleur-de-lys is also worn to the canvas on which it was wrought. On one side scarcely a gold thread remains, which enables one, however, to perceive that the embroidery was done on fine canvas, or, perhaps, rather coarse linen, twofold: that then it was laid on the velvet, seamed to it, and the edges cut away, the

stitches round the edge being covered with a kind of cordon, or golden thread, sewed over ;—just, indeed, as we sew muslin on net.

There are three, in the same depository, of the date of Queen Elizabeth. One a book of prayers, copied out by herself before she ascended the throne. The back is covered with canvas, wrought all over in a kind of tentstitch of rich crimson silk, and silver thread intermixed. This groundwork may or may not be the work of the needle, but there is little doubt that Elizabeth's own needle wrought the ornaments thereon, viz., H. K. intertwined in the middle ; a smaller H. above and below, and roses in the corners ; all raised high, and worked in blue silk and silver. This is the dedication of the book. "*Illustrissimo ac potentissimo Henrico octavo, Angliæ, Franciæ, Hiberniæq. regi, fidei defensori, et secundum Christum ecclesiæ Anglicanæ et Hibernicæ supremo capiti. Elizabetha Majest. S. humillima filia omne felicitatem precatur, et benedictionem suam suplex petit.*"

There is in the Bodleian library among the MSS. the epistles of St. Paul, printed in old black letter, the binding of which was also queen Elizabeth's work ; and her handwriting appears at the beginning, viz.

"AUGUST.—I walk many times into the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I plucke up the goodliesome herbes of sentences by pruning : eate them by reading : chawe them by musing : and laie them up at length in the hie seate of memorie by gathering them together : that so having tasted thy sweetness I may the less perceive the bitterness of this miserable life."

The covering is done in needlework by the queen (then princess) herself: on one side an embroidered star, on the other a heart, and round each, as borders, Latin sentences are wrought, such as “*Beatus qui Divitias scripturæ legens verba vertit in opera.*”—“*Vicit omnia pertinax virtus.*” &c., &c.\*

There is a book in the British Museum, very *petite*, a MS. containing a French Pastoral—date 1587—of which the satin or brocade back is loaded with needlework in gold and silver, which now, however, looks heavy and tasteless.

But the most beautiful is Archbishop Parker’s, “*De Antiquitate Britannicæ Ecclesiæ:*” A.D. 1572.

The material of the back is rich green velvet, but it is thickly covered with embroidery: there has not indeed, originally, been space to lay a fourpenny-piece. It is entirely covered with animals and flowers, in green, crimson, lilac, and yellow silk, and gold thread. Round the edge is a border about an inch broad, of gold thread.

Of the date of 1624 is a book of magnificent penmanship, by the hand of a female, of emblems and inscriptions. It is bound in crimson silk, having in the centre a Prince’s Feather worked in gold-thread, with the feathers bound together with large pearls, and round it a wreath of leaves and flowers. Round the edge there is a broader wreath, with corner sprigs all in gold thread, thickly interspersed with spangles and gold leaves.

All these books, with the exception of the one quoted from Ballard’s *Memoirs*, were most obligingly sought out and brought to me by the gentle-

\* Ballard’s *Memoirs*.

men at the British Museum. Probably there are more ; but as, unfortunately for my purpose, the books there are catalogued according to their authors, their contents, or their intrinsic value, instead of their outward seeming, it is not easy, amidst three or four hundred thousand volumes, to pick out each insignificant book which may happen to be—

“ In velvet bound and broider’d o’er.”

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

## NEEDLEWORK OF ROYAL LADIES.

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“ Thus is a Needle prov’d an Instrument  
 Of profit, pleasure, and of ornament,  
 Which mighty Queenes have grac’d in hand to take.”

JOHN TAYLOR.

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NEEDLEWORK is an art so attractive in itself; it is capable of such infinite variety, and is such a beguiler of lonely, as of social hours, and offers such scope to the indulgence of fancy, and the display of taste; it is withal—in its lighter branches—accompanied with so little bodily exertion, not deranging the most *recherché* dress, nor incommoding the most elaborate and exquisite costume, that we cannot wonder that it has been practised with ardour even by those the farthest removed from any necessity for its exercise. Therefore has it been from the earliest ages a favourite employment of the high and nobly born.

The father of song hardly refers at all to the noble dames of Greece and Troy but as occupied in “painting with the needle.” Some, the heroic achievements of their countrymen on curtains and



draperies, others various rich and rare devices on banners, on robes and mantles, destined for festival days, for costly presents to ambassadors, or for offerings to friends. And there are scattered notices at all periods of the prevalence of this custom. In all ages until this of

“ inventions rare  
Steam towns and towers.”

the preparation of apparel has fallen to woman's share, the spinning, the weaving, and the manufacture of the material itself from which garments were made. But, though we read frequently of high-born dames spinning in the midst of their maids, it is probable that this drudgery was performed by inferiors and menials, whilst enough, and more than enough of arduous employment was left for the ladies themselves in the rich tapestries and embroideries which have ever been coveted and valued, either as articles of furniture, or more usually for the decoration of the person.

Rich and rare garments used to be infinitely more the attribute of high rank than they now are; and in more primitive times a princess was not ashamed to employ herself in the construction of her own apparel or that of her relatives. Of this we have an intimation in the old ballad of ‘Hardyknute’—beginning

“ Stately stept he east the wa’,  
And stately stept he west.”

“ Farewell, my dame, sae peerless good,  
(And took her by the hand,)  
Fairer to me in age you seem,  
Than maids for beauty fam’d.

My youngest son shall here remain  
 To guard these lonely towers,  
 And shut the silver bolt that keeps  
 Sae fast your painted bowers.

“ And first she wet her comely cheeks,  
 And then her boddice green,  
 Her silken cords of twisted twist,  
 Well plett with silver sheen ;  
 And apron set with mony a dice  
 Of needlewark sae rare,  
 Wove by nae hand, as ye may guess,  
 Save that of Fairly fair.”

But it harmonises better with our ideas of high or royal life to hear of some trophy for the warrior, some ornament for the knightly bower, or some decorative offering for the church, emanating from the taper fingers of the courtly fair, than those kirtles and boddices which, be they ever so magnificent, seem to appertain more naturally to the “ milliner’s practice.” Therefore, though we give the gentle Fairly fair all possible praise for notability in the

“ Apron set with mony a dice  
 Of needlework sae rare,”

we certainly look with more regard on such work as that of the Danish princesses who wrought a standard with the national device, the Raven,\* on it,

\* This sacred standard was taken by the Saxons in Devonshire, in a fortunate onset, in which they slew one of the Sea-kings with eight hundred of his followers. So superstitious a reverence was attached to this ensign that its loss is said to have broken the spirit of even these ruthless plunderers. It was woven by the sisters of Inguar and Ubba, who divined by it. If the Raven (which was worked on it) moved briskly in the wind, it was a sign of victory, but if it drooped and hung heavily, it was supposed to prognosticate discomfiture

and which was long the emblem of terror to those opposed to it on the battle-field. Of a gentler character was the stupendous labour of Queen Matilda—the Bayeux tapestry—on which we have dwelt too long elsewhere to linger here, and which was wrought by her and under her superintendence.

Queen Adelicia, the second wife of Henry I., was a lady of distinguished beauty and high talent: she was remarkable for her love of needlework, and the skill with which she executed it. One peculiar production of her needle has recently been described by her accomplished biographer; it was a standard which “she embroidered in silk and gold for her father, during the memorable contest in which he was engaged for the recovery of his patrimony, and which was celebrated throughout Europe for the exquisite taste and skill displayed by the royal Adelicia in the design and execution of her patriotic achievement. This standard was unfortunately captured at a battle near the castle of Duras, in 1129, by the Bishop of Liege and the Earl of Limbourg, the old competitor of Godfrey for Lower Lorraine, and was by them placed as a memorial of their triumph in the great church of St. Lambert, at Liege, and was for centuries carried in procession on Rogation days through the streets of that city. The church of St. Lambert was destroyed during the French Revolution. The plain where this memorable trophy was taken is still called the “Field of the Standard.”

Perhaps, second only to Queen Matilda's work, or indeed superior to it, as being entirely the production of her own hand, were the needlework pieces of Joan D'Albert, who ascended the throne

of Navarre in 1555. Though her own career was varied and eventful, she is best known to posterity as the mother of the great Henry IV. She adopted the reformed religion, of which she became, not without some risk to her crown thereby, the zealous protectress, and on Christmas-day, 1562, she made a public profession of the Protestant faith; she prohibited the offices of the Catholic religion to be performed in her domains, and suffered in consequence many alarms from her Catholic subjects. But she possessed great courage and fortitude, and baffled all open attacks. Against concealed treachery she could not contend. She died suddenly at the court of France in 1572, as it was strongly suspected, by poison.

This queen possessed a vigorous and cultivated understanding; was acquainted with several languages, and composed with facility both in prose and verse. Her needlework, the amusement and solace of her leisure hours, was designed by her as “a commemoration of her love for, and steadiness to, the reformed faith.” It is thus described by Boyle: “She very much loved devices, and she wrought with her own hand fine and large pieces of tapestry, among which was a suit of hangings of a dozen or fifteen pieces, which were called *THE PRISONS OPENED*; by which she gave us to understand that she had broken the pope’s bonds, and shook off his yoke of captivity. In the middle of every piece is a story of the Old Testament which savours of liberty—as the deliverance of Susannah; the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt; the setting Joseph at liberty, &c. And at all the cor-

ners are broken chains, shackles, racks, and gibbets ; and over them in great letters, these words of the third chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, UBI SPIRITUS IBI LIBERTAS.

To show yet more fully the aversion she had conceived against the Catholic religion, and particularly against the sacrifice of the mass, having a fine and excellent piece of tapestry, made by her mother, Margaret, before she had suffered herself to be cajoled by the ministers, in which was perfectly well wrought the sacrifice of the mass, and a priest who held out the holy host to the people, she took out the square in which was this history, and, instead of the priest, with her own hand substituted a fox, who turning to the people, and making a horrible grimace with his paws and throat, delivered these words, DOMINUS VOBISCUM.

We are told that Anne of Brittany, the good Queen of France, assembled three hundred of the children of the nobility at her court, where, under her personal superintendence, they were instructed in such accomplishments as became their rank and sex, but the girls, most especially, made accomplished needle-women. Embroidery was their occupation during some specified hours of every day, and they wrought much tapestry, which was presented by their royal protectress to different churches.

Her daughter Claude, the queen of Francis I., formed her court on the same model and maintained the same practice ; Queen Anne Boleyn was educated in her court, and was doomed to consume a large portion of her time in the occupation of the



needle. It was an employment little suited to her lively disposition and coquettish habits, and we do not hear, during her short occupation of the throne, that she resorted to it as an amusement.

“ Ai lavori d’Aracne, all ’ago, ai fusi  
Inchinar non degnò la man superba.”

The practice of devoting some hours to embroidery seems to have continued in the French court. When the young Queen of Scots was there, the French princesses assembled every afternoon in the queen’s (Catherine of Medici’s) private apartment, where “ she usually spent two or three hours in embroidery with her female attendants.”

It is also said, that Katharine of Arragon was in the habit of employing the ladies of her court in needlework, in which she was herself extremely assiduous, working with them and encouraging them by her example. Burnet records, that when two legates requested once to speak with her, she came out to them with a skein of silk about her neck, and told them she had been within at work with her women. An anecdote, as far as regards the skein of silk, somewhat more housewifely than queenly.

In this she differed much from her successor, Queen Catherine Parr, for having had her nativity cast when a child, and being told, from the disposition of the stars and planets in her house, that she was born to sit in the highest seat of imperial majesty; child as she was, she was so impressed by the prediction, that when her mother required her to work she would say, “ My hands are ordained to touch crowns and sceptres, not needles and spindles.”

When the orphaned daughter of this lady, by the lord admiral, was consigned to the care of the Duchess of Suffolk, the furniture of "her former nursery" was to be sent with her. The list is rather curious, and we subjoin it.

"Two pots, three goblets, one salt parcel gilt, a maser with a band of silver and parcel gilt, and eleven spoons; a quilt for the cradle, three pillows, three feather-beds, three quilts, a testor of scarlet embroidered with a counterpoint of silk say belonging to the same, and curtains of crimson taffeta; two counterpoints of imagery for the nurse's bed, six pair of sheets, six fair pieces of hangings within the inner chamber; four carpets for windows, ten pieces of hangings of the twelve months within the outer chamber, two quishions of cloth of gold, one chair of cloth of gold, two wrought stools, a bedstead gilt, with a testor and counterpoint, with curtains belonging to the same."

Return we to Katharine of Arragon: her needlework labours have been celebrated both in Latin and English verse. The following sonnet refers to specimens in the Tower, which now indeed are swept away, having left not "a wreck behind."

"I read that in the seventh King Henrie's reigne,  
Fair Katharine, daughter to the Castile king,  
Came into England with a pompous traine  
Of Spanish ladies which shee thence did bring.  
She to the eighth King Henry married was,  
And afterwards divorc'd, where virtuously  
(Although a Queene), yet she her days did pass  
In working with the *needle* curiously,  
As in the Tower, and places more beside,  
Her excellent memorials may be seen;  
Whereby the *needle's* prayse is dignified  
By her faire ladies, and herselfe, a Queene.

Thus far her paines, here her reward is just,  
Her works proclaim her prayse, though she be dust."

The same pen also celebrated her daughter's skill in this feminine occupation.

Mary was skilled in all sorts of embroidery; and when her mother's divorce consigned her to a private life, she beguiled the intervals of those severer studies in which she peaceably and laudably occupied her time in various branches of needlework. It is not unlikely the Psalter we have alluded to elsewhere was embroidered by herself; and a reference to the fashionable occupations of the day will bring to our minds various trifling articles, the embroidery of which beguiled her time, though they have long since passed away.

" Her daughter Mary here the sceptre swaid,  
And though she were a Queene of mighty power,  
Her memory will never be decaid,  
Which by her works are likewise in the Tower,  
In Windsor Castle, and in Hampton Court,  
In that most pompous roome called Paradise;  
Who ever pleaseth thither to resort,  
May see some workes of hers, of wondrous price.  
Her greatness held it no disreputation  
To take the needle in her royal hand;  
Which was a good example to our nation  
To banish idleness from out her land:  
And thus this Queene, in wisdom thought it fit,  
The needle's worke pleas'd her, and she grac'd it."

We extract the following notice of the gentle and excellent Lady Jane Grey, from the ' Court Magazine.'

"Ten days' royalty! Alas, how deeply fraught with tragic interest is the historic page recording the events of that brief period! and how immeasurable the results proceeding therefrom Love, beauty, religious constancy, genius, and learning, were seen

in early womanhood intermingling their glorious halo with the dark shadowings of despotism, imprisonment, and violent death upon the scaffold!

“ In the most sequestered part of Leicestershire, backed by rude eminences, and skirted by lowly and romantic valleys, stands Bradgate, the birth-place and abode of Lady Jane Grey. The approach to Bradgate from the village of Cropston is striking. On the left stands a group of venerable trees, at the extremity of which rise the remains of the once magnificent mansion of the Greys of Groby. On the right is a hill, known by the name of ‘ The Coppice,’ covered with slate, but so intermixed with fern and forest-flowers as to form a beautiful contrast to the deep shades of the surrounding woods. To add to the loveliness of the scene, a winding trout-stream finds its way from rock to rock, washing the walls of Bradgate until it reaches the fertile meadows of Swithland.

“ In the distance, situate upon a hill, is a tower, called by the country-people Old John, commanding a magnificent view of the adjoining country, including the distant castles of Nottingham and Belvoir. With the exception of the chapel and kitchen, the princely mansion has now become a ruin; but a tower still stands, which tradition points out as her birth-place. Traces of the tilt-yard are visible, with the garden-walls, and a noble terrace whereon Jane often walked and sported in her childhood; and the rose and lily still spring in favourable nooks of that wilderness, once the pleasance, or pleasure-garden of Bradgate. Near the brook is a beautiful group of old chestnut-trees.

“ This was thy home then, gentle Jane,  
This thy green solitude ; and here  
At evening from the gleaming pane,  
Thine eye oft watched the dappled deer  
(While the soft sun was in its wane)  
Browsing beside the brooklet clear ;  
The brook runs still, the sun sets now,  
The deer yet browseth—where art thou ?”

“ Instead of skill in drawing she cultivated the art of painting with the needle, and at Zurich is still to be seen, together with the original MS. of her Latin letters to the reformer Bullinger, a toilet beautifully ornamented by her own hands, which had been presented by her to her learned correspondent.”

In the court of Catherine de Medicis Mary Queen of Scots was habituated to the daily practice of needlework, and thus fostered her natural taste for the art which she had acquired in the convent—supposed to have been St. Germaine-en-Laye, where she was placed during the early part of her residence in France. She left this convent with the utmost regret, revisited it whenever she was permitted, and gladly employed her needle in embroidering an altarpiece for its church.

This predilection for needlework never forsook her, but proved a beguilement and a solace during the weary years of her subsequent imprisonment, especially after she was separated from the female friends who at first accompanied her. During a part of her confinement, while she was still on comparatively friendly terms with Elizabeth, she transmitted several elegant pieces of her own needlework to this princess. She wrought a canopy, which was



placed in the presence-chamber at Whitehall, consisting of an empalement of the arms of France and Scotland, embroidered under an imperial crown. It does not appear at what period of her life she worked it. During the early part of her confinement she was asked how, in unfavourable weather, she passed the time within. She said that all that day she wrought with her needle, and that the diversity of the colours made the work seem less tedious; and she continued so long at it, till very pain made her to give over.

“Upon this occasion she entered into a pretty disputable comparison between carving, painting, and working with the needle; affirming painting, in her own opinion, for the most commendable quality. No doubt it was during her confinement in England that she worked the bed still preserved at Chatsworth.”

The following notices from her own letters, though trifling, are interesting memorials of this melancholy part of her life:—

“July 9, 1574.—I pray you send me some pigeons, red partridges, and Barbary fowls. I mean to try to rear them in this country, or keep them in cages: it is an amusement for a prisoner, and I do so with all the little birds I can obtain.

“July 18, 1574.—Always bear in mind that my will in all things be strictly followed; and send me, if it be possible, some one with my accounts. He must bring me patterns of dresses and samples of cloths, gold and silver, stuffs and silks, the most costly and new now worn at court. Order for me

at Poissy a couple of coifs, with gold and silver crowns, such as they have made for me before. Remind Breton of his promise to send me from Italy the newest kind of head-dress, veils, and ribands, wrought with gold and silver, and I will repay him.

“September 22.—Deliver to my uncle the cardinal the two cushions of my work which I send herewith. Should he be gone to Lyons, he will doubtless send me a couple of beautiful little dogs; and you likewise may procure a couple for me: for, except in reading and working, I take pleasure solely in all the little animals I can obtain. You must send them hither very comfortably put up in baskets.

“February 12, 1576.—I send the king of France some poodle-dogs (barbets), but can only answer for the beauty of the dogs, as I am not allowed either to hunt or to ride.”\*

It is said that one of the articles which in its preparation beguiled her, perchance, of some melancholy thoughts, was a waistcoat, which, having richly and beautifully embroidered, she sent to her son; and that this selfish prince was heartless enough to reject the offering, because his mother (still surely Queen of Scotland in his eyes) addressed it to him as prince.

The poet so often quoted wrote the subjoined sonnet in Queen Elizabeth's praise, whose skill with her needle was remarkable. She was especially an adept in the embroidering with gold and silver,

\* Von Raumer's Contributions.

and practised it much in the early part of her life, though perhaps few specimens of her notability now exist :—

“ When this great queene, whose memory shall not  
By any terme of time be overcaste ;  
For when the world and all therein shall rot,  
Yet shall her glorious fame for ever last :  
When she a maid had many troubles past,  
From jayle to jayle by Maries angry spleene :  
And Woodstocke, and the Tower in prison fast,  
And after all was England's peerlesse queene :  
Yet howsoever sorrow came or went,  
She made the needle her companion still,  
And in that exercise her time she spent,  
As many living yet doe know her skill.  
Thus shee was still a captive, or else crown'd,  
A needlewoman royall and renown'd.”

Of Mary II., the wife of the Prince of Orange, Bishop Fowler writes thus:—“ What an enemy she was to idleness, even in ladies ! Those who had the honour to serve her are living instances. It is well known how great a part of the day they were employed at their needles and several ingenuities ; the queen herself, when more important business would give her leave, working with them. And, that their minds might be well employed at the same time, it was her custom to order one to read to them, while they were at work, either divinity or some profitable history.”

And Burnet thus :—“ When her eyes were endangered by reading too much, she found out the amusement of work ; and in all those hours that were not given to better employment she wrought with her own hands, and that sometimes with so constant a diligence, as if she had been to earn her

bread by it. It was a new thing, and looked like a sight, to see a queen working so many hours a day."

Her taste and industry in embroidery are testified by chairs yet remaining at Hampton Court.

The beautiful and unfortunate Marie Antoinette, lively as was her disposition, and fond as she was of gaiety, did not find either the duties or gaieties of a court inconsistent with the labours of the needle. She was extremely fond of needlework, and during her happiest and gayest years was daily to be found at her embroidery-frame. Her approach to this was a signal that other ladies might equally amuse themselves with their various occupations of embroidery, of knitting, or of *untwisting*—the profitable occupation of that day; and which was so fashionable, such a "rage," that the ladies of the court hardly stirred anywhere without two little work-bags each—one filled with gold fringes, laces, tassels, or any *golden* trumpery they could pick up, the other to contain the gold they unravelled, which they sold to Jews.

It is said to be a fact that duchesses—nay, princesses—have been known to go about from Jew to Jew in order to obtain the highest price for their gold. Dolls and all sorts of toys were made and covered with gold brocades; and the gentlemen never failed rendering themselves agreeable to their fair acquaintance by presenting them with these toys!

Every one knows that the court costume of the French noblemen at that period was most expensive: this absurd custom rendered it doubly, trebly

so ; and was carried to such an excess, that frequently the moment a gentleman appeared in a new coat the ladies crowded round him and soon divested it of all its gold ornaments.

The following is an instance :—“ The Duke de Coigny one night appeared in a new and most expensive coat : suddenly a lady in the company remarked that its gold bindings would be excellent for untwisting. In an instant he was surrounded—all the scissors in the room were at work ; in short, in a few moments the coat was stripped of its laces, its ga-loons, its tassels, its fringes ; and the poor duke, notwithstanding his vexation, was forced by *politeness* to laugh and praise the dexterity of the fair hands that robbed him.”

But what a solace did that passion for needlework, which the queen indulged in herself and encouraged in others, become to her during her fearful captivity. This unhappy princess was born on the day of the Lisbon earthquake, which seemed to stamp a fatal mark on the era of her birth ; and many circumstances occurred during her life which have since been considered as portentous.

“ ’Tis certain that the soul hath oft foretaste  
Of matters which beyond its ken are placed.

One circumstance, simple in itself and easily explained, is recorded by Madame Campan as having impressed Marie with shuddering anticipations of evil :

“ One evening, about the latter end of May, she was sitting in the middle of her room, relating several remarkable occurrences of the day. Four wax



candles were placed upon her toilet: the first went out of itself; I relighted it: shortly afterwards the second, and then the third, went out also: upon which the queen, squeezing my hand with an emotion of terror, said to me, 'Misfortune has power to make us superstitious; if the fourth taper go out like the first, nothing can prevent my looking upon it as a fatal omen!' The fourth taper went out."

At an earlier period Goëthe seems, with somewhat of a poet's inspiration, to have read a melancholy fate for her. When young he was completing his studies at Strasburg. In an isle in the middle of the Rhine a pavilion had been erected, intended to receive Marie Antoinette and her suite, on her way to the French court.

"I was admitted into it," says Goëthe, in his *Memoirs*: "on my entrance I was struck with the subject depicted in the tapestry with which the principal pavilion was hung, in which were seen Jason, Creusa, and Medea; that is to say, a representation of the most fatal union commemorated in history. On the left of the throne the bride, surrounded by friends and distracted attendants, was struggling with a dreadful death; Jason, on the other side, was starting back, struck with horror at the sight of his murdered children; and the Fury was soaring into the air in her chariot drawn by dragons. Superstition apart, this strange coincidence was really striking. The husband, the bride, and the children, were victims in both cases: the fatal omen seemed accomplished in every point."

The following notices of her imprisonment would but be spoiled by any alteration of language. We

shall perceive that one of her greatest troubles in prison, before her separation from the king, and the dauphin, was the being deprived of her sewing implements.

“ During the early part of Louis XVI.’s imprisonment, and while the treatment of him and his family was still human, his majesty employed himself in educating his son ; while the queen, on her part, educated her daughter. Then they passed some time in needlework, knitting, or tapestry-work.

“ At this time the royal family were in great want of clothes, insomuch that the princesses were employed in mending them every day ; and Madame Elizabeth was often obliged to wait till the king was gone to bed, in order to have his to repair. The linen they brought to the Tower had been lent them by friends, some by the Countess of Sutherland, who found means to convey linen and other things for the use of the dauphin. The queen wished to write a letter to the countess expressive of her thanks, and to return some of these articles, but her majesty was debarred from pen and ink ; and the clothes she returned were stolen by her jailors, and never found their way to their right owner.

“ After many applications, a little new linen was obtained ; but the sempstress having marked it with crowns, the municipal officers insisted on the princesses’ picking the marks *out*, and they were forced to obey.

“ *Dec. 7.*—An officer, at the head of a deputation from the commune, came to the king and read a decree, ordering that the persons in confinement

should be deprived of all scissors, razors, knives—instruments usually taken from criminals ; and that the strictest search should be made for the same, as well on their persons as in their apartments. The king took out of his pocket a knife and a small morocco pocket-book, from which he gave the pen-knife and scissors. The officers searched every corner of the apartments, and carried off the razors, the curling-irons, the powder-scraper, instruments for the teeth, and many articles of gold and silver. They took away from the princesses their knitting-needles, and all the little articles they used for their embroidery. The unhappy queen and princesses were the more sensible of the loss of the little instruments taken from them, as they were in consequence forced to give up all the feminine handiworks which till then had served to beguile prison hours. At this time the king's coat became ragged, and as the Princess Elizabeth, his sister, was mending it, as she had no scissors, the king observed that she had to bite off the thread with her teeth—‘What a reverse!’ said the king, looking tenderly upon her; ‘you were in want of nothing at your pretty house at Montreuil.’ ‘Ah, brother!’ she replied, ‘can I feel a regret of any kind while I share your misfortunes?’”

The Empress Josephine is said to have played and sung with exquisite feeling: her dancing is said to have been perfect. She exercised her pencil, and—though such be not now antiquated for an *élégante*—her needle and embroidery-frame, with beautiful address.

Towards the close of her eventful career, when,

after her divorce from Bonaparte, she kept a sort of domestic court at Navarre or Malmaison, she and her ladies worked daily at tapestry or embroidery—one reading aloud whilst the others were thus occupied; and the hangings of the saloon at Malmaison were entirely her own work. They must have been elegant; the material was white silk, the embroidery roses, in which at intervals were entwined her own initials.

An interesting circumstance is related of a conversation between one of those ministering spirits, a *sœur de la charité*, and Josephine, in a time of peculiar excitement and trouble. At the conclusion of it, the *sœur*, having discovered with whom she was conversing, added, “Since I am addressing the mother of the afflicted, I no longer fear my being indiscreet in any demand I may make for suffering humanity. We are in great want of lint; if your majesty would condescend”——“I promise you shall have some; we will make it ourselves.”

From that moment the evenings were employed at Malmaison in making lint, and the empress yielded to none in activity at this work.

Few of my readers will have accompanied me to this point without anticipating the name with which these slight notices of royal needlewomen must conclude—a name which all know, and which, knowing, all reverence as that of a dignified princess, a noble and admirable matron—Adelaide, our Dowager Queen. It was hers to reform the morals of a court which, to our shame, had become licentious; it was hers to render its charmed circle as pure and virtuous as the domestic hearth of the most scrupulous

British matron ; it was hers to combine with the chilling etiquette of regal state the winning virtues of private life, and to weave a wreath of domestic virtues, social charities, and beguiling though simple occupations, round the stately majesty of England's throne.

The days are past when it would be either pleasurable or profitable for the Queen of the British empire to spend her days, like Matilda or Katharine, "in poring over the interminable mazes of tapestry ;" but it is well known that Queen Adelaide, and, in consequence of her Majesty's example, those around her, habitually occupied their leisure moments in ornamental needlework ; and there have been, of late years, few Bazaars throughout the kingdom, for really beneficent purposes, which have not been enriched by the contributions of the Queen Dowager—contributions ever gladly purchased at a high price, not for their intrinsic worth, but because they had been wrought by a hand which every Englishwoman had learnt to respect and love.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

## ON MODERN NEEDLEWORK.

“Our Country everywhere is fill’d  
With Ladies, and with Gentlewomen, skild  
In this rare Art.”

TAYLOR.

“For here the needle plies its busy task,  
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower  
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
Unfolds its bosom ; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,  
And curling tendrils gracefully dispos’d,  
Follow the nimble fingers of the fair ;  
A wreath that cannot fade.”

COWPER.

“The great variety of needleworks which the ingenious women of other countries, as well as of our own, have invented, will furnish us with constant and amusing employment ; and though our labours may not equal a Mineron’s or an Aylesbury’s, yet, if they unbend the mind, by fixing its attention on the progress of any elegant or imitative art, they answer the purpose of domestic amusement ; and, when the higher duties of our station do not call forth our exertions, we may feel the satisfaction of knowing that we are, at least, innocently employed.”

MRS. GRIFFITHS.

THE triumph of modern art in needlework is probably within our own shores, achieved by our countrywoman,—Miss Linwood. “Miss Lin-

wood's Exhibition" used to be one of the lions of London, and fully deserves to be so now. To women it must always be an interesting sight; and the "nobler gender" cannot but consider it as a curious one, and not unworthy even of their notice as an achievement of art. Many of these pictures are most beautiful; and it is not without great difficulty that you can assure yourself that they are *bonâ fide* needlework. Full demonstration, however, is given you by the facility of close approach to some of the pieces.

Perhaps the most beautiful of the whole collection—a collection consisting of nearly a hundred pieces of all sizes—is the picture of Miss Linwood herself, copied from a painting by Russell, taken in about her nineteenth year. She must have been a beautiful creature; and as to this copy being done with a needle and worsted,—nobody would suppose such a thing. It is a perfect painting. In the catalogue which accompanies these works she refers to her own portrait with the somewhat touching expression, (from Shakspeare,)

"Have I lived thus long——"

This lady is now in her eighty-fifth year. Her life has been devoted to the pursuit of which she has given so many beautiful testimonies. She had wrought two or three pieces before she reached her twentieth year; and her last piece, "The Judgment of Cain," which occupied her ten years, was finished in her seventy-fifth year; since when, the failure of her eyesight has put an end to her labours.

The pieces are worked, not on canvas, nor, we are

told, on linen, but on some peculiar fabric made purposely for her. Her worsteds have all been dyed under her own superintendence; and it is said the only relief she has ever had in the manual labour was in having an assistant to thread her needles.

Some of the pieces after Gainsborough are admirable; but perhaps Miss Linwood will consider her greatest triumph to be in her copy of Carlo Dolci's "*Salvator Mundi*," for which she has been offered, and has refused, three thousand guineas.

The style of modern embroidery, now so fashionable, from the Berlin patterns, dates from the commencement of the present century. About the year 1804-5, a print-seller in Berlin, named Philipson, published the first coloured design, on checked paper for needlework. In 1810, Madame Wittich, who, being a very accomplished embroideress, perceived the great extension of which this branch of trade was capable, induced her husband, a book and print-seller of Berlin, to engage in it with spirit. From that period the trade has gone on rapidly increasing, though within the last six years the progression has been infinitely more rapid than it had previously been, owing to the number of new publishers who have engaged in the trade. By leading houses, up to the commencement of the year 1840, there have been no less than fourteen thousand copper-plate designs published.

In the scale of consumption, and, consequently, by a fair inference, in the quantity of needlework done, Germany stands first; then Russia, England, France, America, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, &c.,

the three first names on the list being by far the largest consumers. It is difficult to state with precision the number of persons employed to *colour* these plates, but a principal manufacturer estimates them as upwards of twelve hundred, chiefly women.

At first these patterns were chiefly copied in silk, then in beads, and lastly in dyed wools; the latter more especially, since the Germans have themselves succeeded in producing those beautiful "Zephyr" yarns known in this country as the "Berlin wools." These yarns, however, are only dyed in Berlin, being manufactured at Gotha. It is not many years since the Germans drew all their fine woollen yarns from this country: now they are the *exporters*, and probably will so remain, whatever be the *quality* of the wool produced in England, until the art of *dyeing* be as well understood and as scientifically practised.

Of the fourteen thousand Berlin patterns which have been published scarcely one-half are moderately good; and all the best which they have produced latterly are copied from English and French prints. Contemplating the improvement that will probably ere long take place in these patterns, needlework may be said to be yet in its infancy.

The improvement, however, must not be confined to the Berlin designers: the taste of the consumer, the public taste must also advance before needlework shall assume that approximation to art which is so desirable, and not perhaps now, with modern facilities, difficult of attainment. Hitherto the chief anxiety seems to have been to produce a glare of

colour, rather than that subdued but beautiful effect which makes of every piece issuing from the Gobelins a perfect picture, wrought by different means, it is true, but with the very same materials.

The Berlin publishers cannot be made to understand this: for, when they have a good design to copy from, they mar all by the introduction of some adventitious frippery, as in the "Bolton Abbey," where the repose and beautiful effect of the picture is destroyed by the introduction of a bright sky, and straggling bushes of lively green, just where the Artist had thought it necessary to depict the stillness of the inner court of the Monastery, with its solemn grey walls, as a relief to the figures in the foreground.

Many ladies of rank in Germany add to their pin-money by executing needlework for the warehouses.

France consumes comparatively but few Berlin patterns. The French ladies persevere in the practice of working on drawings previously traced on the canvas: the consequence is that, notwithstanding their general skill and assiduity, good work is often wasted on that which cannot produce an artist-like effect. They are, however, by far the best embroideresses in chenille,—silk and gold. By embroidery we mean that which is done on a solid ground, as silk or cloth.

The tapestry or canvas-work is now thoroughly understood in this country; and by the help of the Berlin patterns more *good* things are produced here as articles of furniture than in France.

The present mode of furnishing houses is fa-



vourable to needlework. At a time when fashion enacted that all the sofas and chairs of an apartment should match, the completely furnishing it with needlework (as so many in France have been) was the constant occupation of a whole family—mother, daughters, cousins, and servants—for years, and must indeed have been completely wearisome; but a cushion, a screen, or an odd chair, is soon accomplished, and at once takes its place among the many odd-shaped articles of furniture which are now found in a fashionable saloon.

Francfort-on-the-Maine is much busying itself just now with needlework. The commenced works imported from this city are made up partly from Berlin patterns, and partly from fanciful combinations; but although generally speaking *well worked*, they are too complicated to be easy of execution, and very few indeed of those brought to this country are ever *finished* by the purchaser.

The history of the progress of the modern tapestry-needlework in this country is brief. Until the year 1831, the Berlin patterns were known to very few persons, and used by fewer persons still. They had for some time been imported by Ackermann and some others, but in very small numbers indeed. In the year 1831, they, for the first time, fell under the notice of Mr. Wilks, Regent street, (to whose kindness I am indebted for the valuable information on the Berlin patterns given above,) and he immediately purchased all the good designs he could procure, and also made large purchases both of patterns and working materials direct from Berlin, and thus laid the foundation of the trade in England.

He also imported from Paris a large selection of their best examples in tapestry, and also an assortment of silks of those exquisite tints which, as yet, France only can produce ; and by inducing French artists, educated for this peculiar branch of design, to accompany him to England, he succeeded in establishing in England this elegant art.

This fashionable tapestry-work, certainly the most useful kind of ornamental needlework, seems quite to have usurped the place of the various other embroideries which have from time to time engrossed the leisure moments of the fair. It may be called mechanical, and so in a degree it certainly is ; but there is infinitely more scope for fancy, taste, and even genius here, than in any other of the large family of “satin sketches” and embroideries.

Yes, there is certainly room in worsted work for genius to exert itself—the genius of a painter—in the selection, arrangement, and combination of colours, of light and shade, &c. ; we do not mean in glaring arabesques, but in the landscape and the portrait. There is an instance given by Pennant,\* where the skill and taste of the needle-woman imparted a grace to her picture which was wanting in the original.

“In one of the apartments of the palace (Lambeth) is a performance that does great honour to the ingenious wife of a modern dignitary—a copy in needlework of a Madonna and Child, after a most capital performance of the Spanish Murillo. There is most admirable grace in the original, which was

\* Some Account of London.—1793.

sold last winter at the price of 800 guineas. It made me lament that this excellent master had wasted so much time on beggars and ragged boys. Beautiful as it is, the copy came improved out of the hand of our skilful countrywoman: a judicious change of colour of part of the drapery has had a most happy effect, and given new excellence to the admired original."

Whilst recording the triumphs of modern needlework, we must not omit to mention a school for the education of the daughters of clergy and decayed tradesmen, in which the art of silk-embroidery was particularly cultivated. This school was under the especial patronage of Queen Charlotte; and a bed of lilac satin, which was there embroidered for her, is now exhibited at Hampton Court, and is really magnificent.

Could we now take a more extended view of modern needlework, how wide the range to which we might refer,—from the jewelled and golden-wrought slippers of the East to the grass-embroidered mocassins of the West; from the gorgeous and glittering raiment of the courtly Persian, the voluptuous Turk, or the luxurious Indian, to the simple, unattractive, yet exquisitely wrought garment made by the Californian from the entrails of the whale: a range wide as the Antipodes asunder in every point except one! that is—the equal though very differently displayed skill, ingenuity, and industry of the needlewoman in almost every corner of the hearth, from the burning equator to the freezing Pole. This we must now pass.

Finally,—feeling as we do that though ornamental

needlework may be a charming occupation for those ladies whose happy lot relieves them from the necessity of “darning hose” and mending night-caps,” yet that a proficiency in plain-sewing is the very life and being of the comfort and respectability of the poor man’s wife,—we cannot close this book without one earnest remark on the systems of teaching needlework now in use in the Central, National, and other schools for the instruction of the poor. There, now, the art is reduced to regular rule, taught by regular system; and there are books of instruction in cutting, in shaping, in measuring,—one for the (late) Model School in Dublin, and another, somewhat similar, for that in the Sanctuary, Westminster, which would be a most valuable acquisition to the work-table of many a needle-loving and industrious lady of the most respectable middle classes of society.

Any of our readers who have been accustomed, as we have, to see the domestic hearths and homes of those who, brought up from infancy in factories, have married young, borne large families, and perhaps descended to the grave without ever having learned how to make a petticoat for themselves, or even a cap for their children,—any who know the reality of this picture, and have seen the misery consequent on it, will join us cordially in expressing the earnest and heartfelt hope, that the extension of mental tuition amongst the lower classes may not supersede, in the smallest iota, that instruction and PRACTICE in sewing which next, the very next, to the knowledge of their catechism, is of vital importance

to the future well-doing of girls in the lower stations of life.\*

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And now my task is finished ; and to you, my kind readers, who have had the courtesy to accompany me thus far, I would fain offer a few words of thanks, of farewell, and, if need be, of apology.

This is, I believe, the first history of needlework ever published. I have met with no other ; I have heard of no other ; and I have experienced no trifling difficulties in obtaining material for this. I have spared no labour, no exertions, no research. I have toiled through many hundreds of volumes for the chance of finding even a line adaptable to my purpose : sometimes I have met with this trifling success, oftener not.

I do not mention these circumstances with any view to exaggerate my own exertions, but merely to convince those ladies, who, having read the book, may feel dissatisfied with the amount of information contained therein, that really no superabundance of material exists. The subject has in all ages been deemed too trifling to obtain more than a passing notice from the historical pen. To myself, my exertions have brought their own "exceeding rich reward ;" for if perchance they were at times productive of fatigue, they yet have winged the flight

\* It cannot be too generally known that within late years schools have been attached to the factories, where, for a fixed and certain proportion of their time, girls are instructed in sewing and reading.



of many lonely hours, which might otherwise have induced weariness or even despondency in their lagging transit.

To you, my countrywomen, I offer the book, not as what it *might* be, but as the best which, under all circumstances, I could now produce. The triumphant general is oftentimes deeply indebted for success to the humble but industrious pioneer ; and those who may hereafter pursue this subject with loftier aims, with more abundant leisure and greater facilities of research, may not disdain to tread the path which I have indicated. I offer to you my book in the hope that it will cause amusement to some, gratification perhaps of a higher order to others, and offence—as I trust and believe—to none.

THE END.





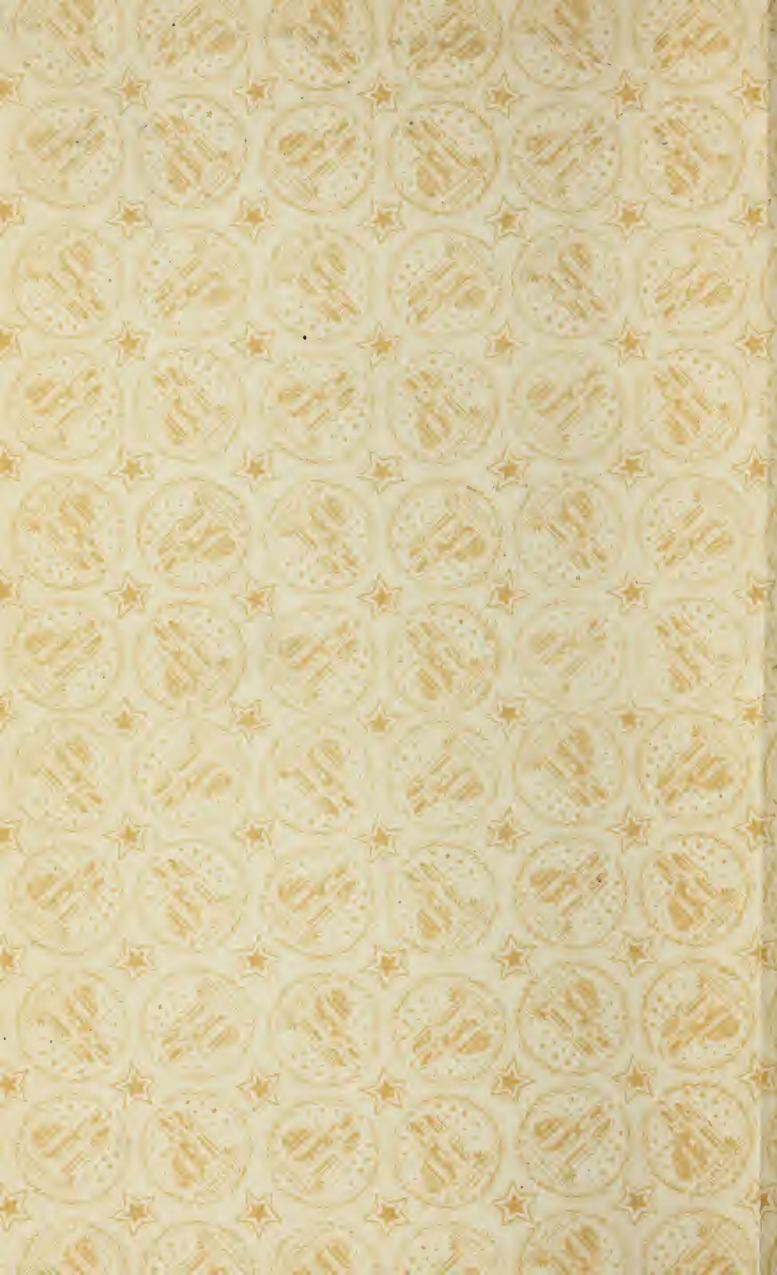














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